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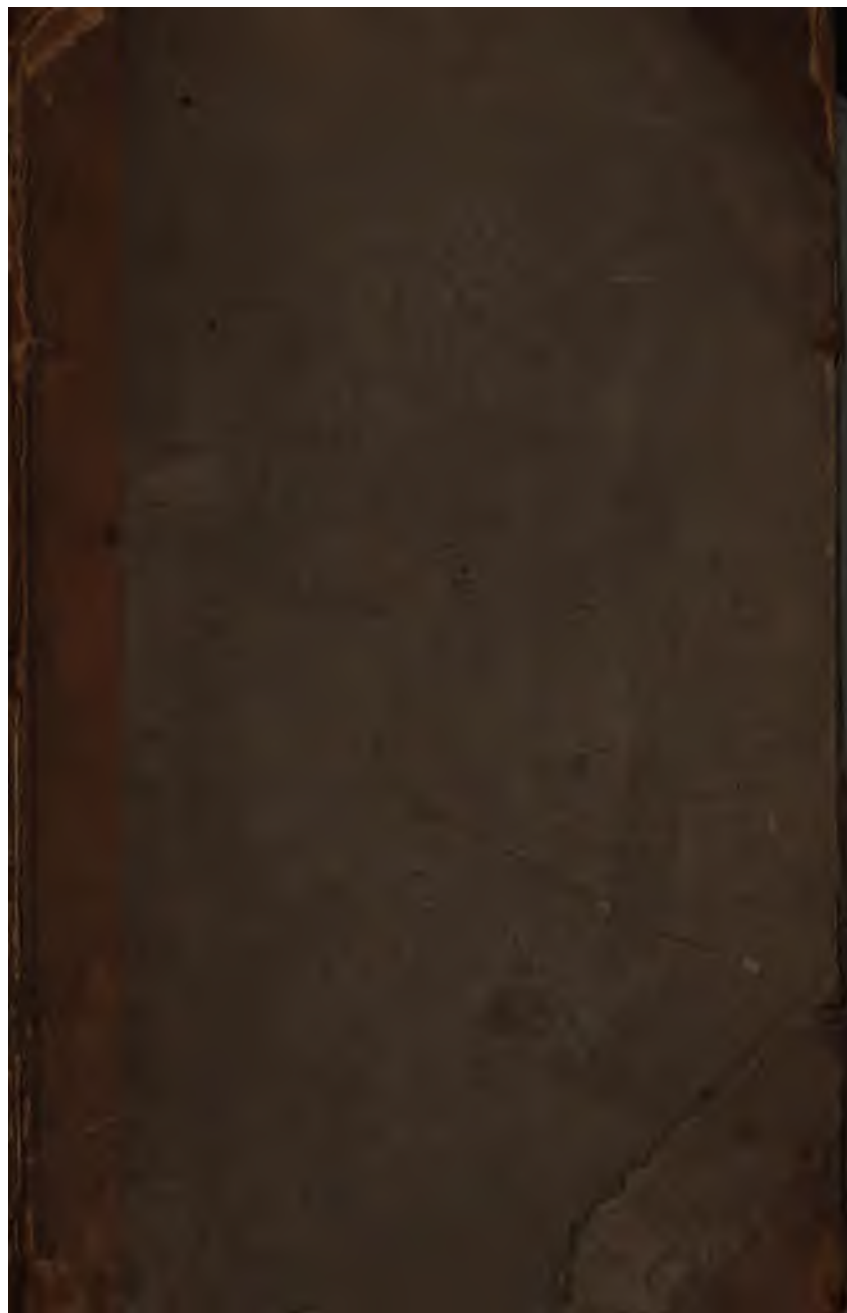
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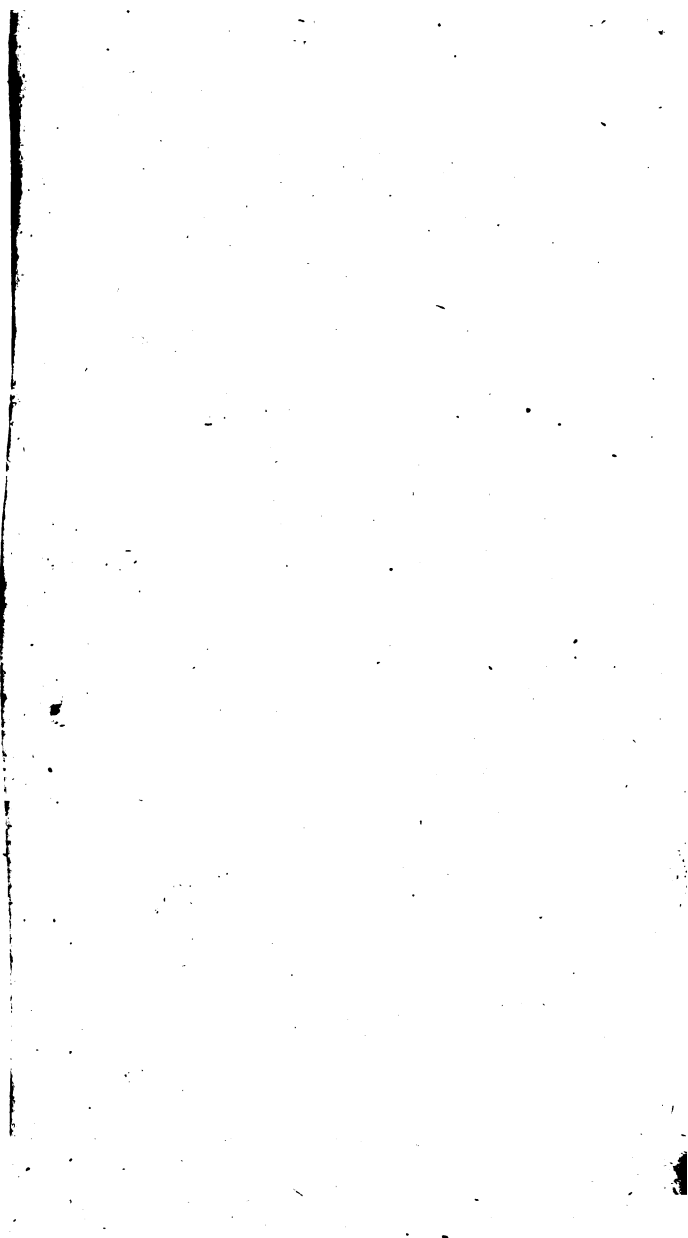
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*Our meeting shall make an epoch, and painting
record it to posterity.*

THE
CAPTIVE OF VALENCE;
OR
THE LAST MOMENTS
OF
PIUS VI.

“ Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried,
“ The Saint sustain'd them, but the PONTIFF died.”—POPE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE READER.

THE Author from whom the following sheets are translated, asserts the various incidents contained in the succeeding narrative to be founded in fact, though clad in the guise of a novel. It is hoped, therefore, that the sigh of commiseration will not be denied to the unhappy fate of the virtuous though unfortunate Pius VI.



THE
CAPTIVE OF VALANCE.

CHAP. I.

The manner in which the author procured information concerning Pius VI.

HAVING spent some months in a solitary country place, I employed myself in reading the several pamphlets published concerning Pius VI. In some, he was represented in the most odious colours; in others, adorned with

every virtue. It would, I thought, be difficult to ascertain the merit of this successor of St. Peter, for he is depicted wicked as a demon, or perfect as a saint: but where to find the man, where the monarch? Occupied one evening by these reflections, I found myself at the entrance of a wood, where several roads met; I took one by chance; and soon discovered, in a valley beneath, a cottage, surrounded by a hedge, and only distinguished from the generality of such rustic habitations, by the extreme neatness of its appearance. I advanced to the door, which stood half open, and was saluted by the

barking of a little dog, who did not seem to welcome a stranger.— His master came out to chide him; but what was my astonishment, at recognizing in the venerable old man, the features of the Marquis ****, whom I had known intimately, in a visit he formerly made to France.

His face seemed more altered by affliction than years; after a short pause, I exclaimed, “surely I am not mistaken, do I not once more behold the Marquis ****, who accompanied the Nuntio Giraud into France.”—“Yes madam.”—“Pardon my curiosity, if I inquire, what could have in-

duced you, so far from your own country, to choose this mode of life?"—"Love of quiet, and philosophy." Observing a sudden change in my countenance, he continued; "I perceive that the meaning of the word philosophy madam, is here as little understood as in Italy. But since I have the unexpected pleasure of seeing you, permit me to request you will come and rest awhile in the hermit's habitation; the name of hermit, I observe, does not alarm you so much as that of philosopher." He then led me into a library, where taste, elegance, and regularity, seemed to vie with

each other, to render it delightful; a number of fine prints, and antique vases of the most graceful form, made a striking contrast with the exterior appearance of the cottage; yet the surrounding rusticity added much to its beauty.

It was that month, when spring is decked in all its charms, the rose and honeysuckle formed garlands round the window of the little cabinet we sat in, the warbling of birds, and the murmuring of a cascade just near, inspired that soft melancholy, which only can make us enjoy in silence the beauties of nature or of art. I perceived from the interior of the

Marquis's dwelling, that poverty had not obliged him to inhabit this humble residence, He had promised to inform me of his motives, which I waited impatiently to hear; but he had not forgot the Italian customs, and chocolate was previously served by an old valet, who seemed to form the whole establishment of the philosopher. When the servant retired, the Marquis began with all that energy which characterizes his nation :—

“ Well, madam, I perceive, that misled by vulgar prejudice, you imagine, because a number of villains call themselves philosophers,

all who bear that name must wear mustachios, a leather cap, and a tattered carmagnol; yet nothing is further from true philosophy, than the conduct and maxims of these banditti; who seem desirous to degrade the virtues (if possible) by bestowing on their crimes and vices, the names of these lovely daughters of heaven; and calling licentiousness, liberty; pillage, justice; and the thirst of gold, contempt of riches. But I shall not repeat what you must already know, by bitter experience, nor describe the French Revolution, my intention is to give you an idea of true philosophy.

"I should be glad you could remove the unfavourable impression made by that word, as it is difficult to persuade ourselves we do not owe to philosophy the evils that have lately overthrown those countries.

"Tell me, (answered the old gentleman with a smile) is not the *real* signification of the word philosophy the same as among the Greeks, the *friend of wisdom*? Is there any wisdom in the subversion of a government which protects our lives and properties, for the introduction of one, that authorises robbery and assassination? for such was the wisdom of those

who sowed the seeds of the disorganizing spirit which has caused so many dreadful calamities in France, and menaced the *safety* of all Europe. What is the pretended philosophy that puts man in the place of its creator; treats as vulgar prejudices, the sacred laws of religion, probity, and honour; breaks asunder the bonds of society, and disregards the obligation of an oath? Ah! madam, beware of believing that such men are worthy the name of philosophers; this title can be deserved by few on earth. What I am going to advance may be regarded in the present age as paradoxical;

but, the true philosopher is the christian. Of this I had a striking proof, (added the Marquis shedding a tear) in my illustrious friend Pope Pius VI—he expired in my arms. I never quitted him from the time of his elevation, till he went to receive the reward of his virtues. I can assert that neither Socrates nor Plato could display more moderation in an exalted state, more fortitude during the disturbances that agitated his latter years, nor more resignation, when having lost all, he was denied the choice of the place where his sufferings were to terminate.”

Here the old gentleman ceased

speaking, which gave me an opportunity of mentioning, that I knew he was Cardinal Giraud's friend ; but had not heard of his intimacy with Pius VI. and that I should be extremely glad to hear some particulars of his life, having read such contradictory accounts of him.

“ Ah ! madam, no one can give better information on that subject than I, who have so long enjoyed the pleasure of his friendship and confidence ; yet do not suspect me of partiality ; Pius VI. was so great a man, as to make it unnecessary for me to dissemble the slight foibles that shaded the brilliant

qualities with which nature had endowed him. To interest you still more in my narration, I must request a few days to look over notes, which I had begun in happier times, and continued till the decease of this head of the church. If my retreat can offer an agreeable termination to your walks, I shall entertain you every evening on the subject of my august friend. It will be a homage to his memory. And if you should wish to transcribe any details, which, my age and infirmities only permit me to indicate they may prove useful to posterity. I thanked my ami-

able friend, and resolved to visit him again the next evening ; endeavouring on my return home to write down what he had related.

CHAP. II.

Infancy of Pius VI.

MY joy at finding, in the master of the cottage an intimate friend, ~~added to the~~ pleasure always felt (since the Revolution) at meeting any one who might have fallen a victim to it, I had the peculiar satisfaction of receiving certain information concerning events so differently related. Impressed with these sentiments, I

hastened towards the rural abode, and was soon met by the Marquis, who led the way to a bower of lilacs, where, inviting me to a seat on a bank of moss, he began as follows :

“ O sweet and interesting friendship, of infantine years, how strong thy ties, how difficult to break ! It seems as if the heart yielded all its sensibility to this sentiment in early life ; and that unions formed in riper age, are not replete with that which marks the spring of our existence. Perhaps mature reason points out the defects of humanity, and prevents our being susceptible of all the enthusiasm

which characterises true friendship. Whatever may be the cause, it is certain that no attachments are more strong, or more lasting, than those formed at College. It was in that of Cezena my friendship for John Angelo Braschi began. There was only ten days difference in our age.

“John Braschi was born at Cezena, a town in Romania, the 27th of December, 1717—and I the 17th of that month, in the same year. His parents and mine, were extremely intimate; they were ancient Nobles; a trifling advantage had men fewer prejudices; but as they were fond of

distinctions, *that* must be reckoned, since even among animals, horses have their pedigree. Although Braschi was of an illustrious descent, yet I never saw a child so humble ; he was filled with the spirit of our holy religion ; and taking example by him who disdained not to become the son of an artizan, he never talked of his ancestors ; nor sought like many indigent men of rank, to hide his poverty under his parchments. In his tender youth he gave me lessons I shall never forget. He possessed from nature an ascendancy over all hearts ; and I have seen him hinder us from

committing faults, only by saying, he should be much concerned to second us in such enterprizes.— Yet we had not the most distant idea, nor he himself, that he should one day be the head of the church, and the successor of the Cæsars.

His taste for the arts manifested itself in his earlier years. I have seen him in ecstasies before a picture which I had scarce observed. He would walk ten leagues to procure a medal, or a fossil. As the most trifling circumstances in the life of one whom fortune had so much exalted, become interesting, I shall mention a few traits

which characterize Braschi from his infancy.

“His inclination for natural history was so great, that when he was in the lowest class at school, he had with infinite taste and industry, made a collection, which he always took care to keep under lock and key.

“One day, he went as usual to his studies, and having finished, returned again to admire, and if possible, to embellish his treasure. O grief! some arch scholars observed that Braschi had forgot the key of his cabinet, and finding all his fine shells, minerals, and superb butterflies at their disposal,

began to examine them, as children usually do, mixing, tossing, and throwing all into confusion, so that my poor little friend at first, thought that scarce any thing remained of what had cost him so much trouble. Braschi had naturally warm passions, and religion alone prevented his giving way to anger. One may judge what a boy, of eleven or twelve, must suffer, when irrevocably deprived of the favourite amusement of his leisure hours ;—he ran about in a rage, defying, whoever had deranged his cabinet, to dare declare himself, and he should find Braschi was not to be affronted

with impunity. Suppose," said I, "that *I* was the person—what would you do?" "Nothing," returned Braschi, "for I love you better than all the shells and minerals in the world." "Then think it *was* me," returned I, (embracing him) "and instead of losing time; by putting yourself in a passion, let us go and endeavour to repair the mischief."

"We went to his chamber, and found nothing missing, and that, with a little patience, all would be restored to order. "I think, at present," said my friend, "that my schoolfellows have rendered me a piece of service in tossing about my collection; for otherwise I

should not have the pleasure of arranging it a second time." Thus early, did he accustom himself to support contradiction. This was not the only virtue his museum gave him an opportunity to exert.

" One evening, in our walks, we approached a vineyard ; the tottering condition of the house, to which it belonged, announced the extreme poverty of the inhabitants ; and the dreadful groans, that issued from the decayed mansion, so frightened Braschi, that his first impulse was to fly ; but surmounting a weakness, (pardonable at his age) he advanced alone, and knocked at the door ; we followed.

A woman soon appeared; her face was pale and emaciated. "What do you want my children?" said she. "We heard, replied Braschi, such dismal cries, that we feared some body was sick."—"No, but extremely unfortunate; it is my daughter whose lamentations you have heard; her husband is in jail for debt, and she has not money to release him, nor any means to support four children, whom she put to bed this evening without a morsel of bread to offer them for supper." 'Twas piteous to hear their cries, and the despair of their mother. "Alas ! exclaimed I, (putting a small sum upon the

table) school-boys are not rich, but you will at least have bread for your children when they awake." She thanked me with the liveliest gratitude. I was surprised that Braschi had remained silent, knowing his charitable heart; I concluded he had no money about him. He only asked the old woman for what sum her son-in-law had been arrested?—"For three hundred florins," she answered, "and this is so great a sum to us, that we never can hope to pay it." She then began to cry bitterly. "Be comforted," said Braschi, "the Almighty does not abandon his creatures,

he sends consolation when it is least expected," My friend then retired.

"In our way home, I began to talk of the distressed family; but Braschi was absorbed in thought, and scarce made any answer.—Unwilling to disturb his meditations, I returned in silence to Cezena. The next day was a holiday: Braschi rose with the sun, sought a purchaser for his dear cabinet, and concluded for six hundred florins, without mentioning a word of the affair to me. He was no sooner paid, than he ran to the cottage, and called the old woman in a low voice, who

inquired what he wanted,—“To save your life, and to restore your son-in-law to liberty:” at these words, Braschi laid down the purse, and ran off. The old woman, overcome with joy and astonishment, presented the purse to her daughter.

“The tender mother’s gratitude, for the trifle she had received the evening before, was unbounded; but the large sum now presented by so young a boy as Braschi, awakened suspicion. “Beware of touching this money, my dear mother, perhaps the youth has disposed of it without the knowledge of his parents; let us lock

up the purse, that we may be able to return it when enquired for."

"Two days had passed, and the payment of our pocket-money became due; I recollected the poor women at the vineyard, and carried them some small relief. I would not, like my friend, entirely sacrifice my pleasures to the unfortunate, and to afford them a little, was according to me, doing very handsomely. But how far below my companion did I think myself, when on approaching the cottage, I was surrounded by the women and children, who, without giving me time to pay the homage

of my sensibility, asked me altogether, if I knew who the youth was that accompanied me a few evenings before to their habitation?—"He is my best friend." "Then, (replied the young mother, taking from a box a large purse) please to return this money to him, or his parents; for we are incapable of taking advantage of this boy's goodness of heart, by accepting so large a sum, which was probably destined for another purpose." My astonishment was great, and soon gave place to my admiration. I had perceived that Braschi went in and out, several times: I had seen a man

carry some cases from the College, but naturally incurious, I never thought of asking what they were; nor could I have guessed that the loved cabinet, to compleat which so many pleasures had been sacrificed, should be employed in relieving people, to whom we were strangers; but when I saw the long purse I no longer doubted.—“You need be under no apprehension; this money belonged to the youth; he may dispose of it as he thinks proper; it is the fruit of economy, and many privations.” “Ah! Sir, could I believe what you tell me, I should be too happy; I

reproached myself for letting my husband remain in prison these two days; but not knowing that amiable child, I dared not dispose of so great a sum." "If you do not believe me, you may inquire at the College of Cezena." "That is unnecessary, your word suffices; and I shall hasten to employ this money as my benefactor desired—to liberate my husband, and give subsistence to my children." I accompanied the woman to the prison: her husband was an old soldier; he had been reduced to his present misery, by becoming security for a friend: he appeared to support his fate

with great resignation ; yet, when he heard that an angel had come to liberate him, he turned pale, fainted, and fell into his wife's arms. When he recovered his senses, he gave himself up to the highest transports of joy ; and begged I would assure my friend, that he and his family would hasten to the College to express their gratitude. I quitted this unfortunate family, who (thanks to my dear Braschi) were now no longer so ; my heart, full of the the sweetest sensibility, felt proud of the virtue of my friend.

“On my return to the College, I cried out, as far off as I could

discern him—"Braschi!—Braschi! some amateurs are coming to see your cabinet of natural history." "It is not in order, it cannot be shewn." "You wont refuse to shew the museum to the poor folks at the vineyard."—"O Heavens! (said he) I am betrayed." I then told him all that happened; and how my parsimonious alms had made me acquainted with a noble action, which he endeavoured to conceal as if it had been a crime. But the grateful family soon joined me, publishing how they had been relieved. The friends of Braschi's parents congratulated them on

having so promising a son, and said, like the Jews of the precursor, whose name he bore, what will that child one day become?"

This anecdote, the truth of which I could not doubt, as the Marquis had been a witness of it, affected me more than I could express. He read in my eyes the interest I took in his recital, and promised to favour me with a detail of the private life of Pius VI.

"History," said he, "disdains to hand to posterity those minute traits in the lives of great men, and this is the reason there appears so little diversity in their characters, while in every private

family we find individuals of dispositions so opposite to each other.

“Legislators, kings, conquerors, are drawn by the pencil of Clio, wise, vicious, beneficent, or dangerous. If the historian can adorn with brilliant actions the period he records, he is indifferent in what age they were performed. The virtues of heroes, I repeat it, are confounded for want of those fainter tints which would show them in their proper light. I, who wish to exhibit my friend to his contemporaries, (I dare not say posterity) what he really was, shall neglect no circumstance to

depict him such as he is engraved on my heart.

“But I see the sun retire behind the forest, madam ;—could an old man presume to offer his humble cot?” “I have yet time enough to reach home, and my family would be uneasy did I not return; this reason, prevents my accepting your obliging offer; but expect me to-morrow evening in this charming bower.”

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infancy. As nature decks the spring with flowers, we observe, during the primeval years of man, the dawn of those brilliant qualities which are to form his future character.

“Braschi's parents, seeing the promising talents of their son, sent him to Rome, to finish his studies, hoping to obtain a Canonicate for him through the interest of Cardinal Ruffo, as Braschi had been destined for an ecclesiastical life. The idea of my separation from so loved a friend and companion, gave me the deepest concern; he endeavoured to console me, by assurances that he would never

forget his friend, and that he would write regularly. He never passed many months without acquainting me that his attachment was still the same. I have translated almost all his letters, not from the vanity of boasting a familiar correspondence with a sovereign; but from the ineffable pleasure I felt in having preserved my friend, in papal splendour.

“Here is his first letter after his departure from Cezena.

“RABIANI, DECEMBER 10, 1735.

“Every moment bears me farther from you; and every moment makes me perceive the void

I feel in your absence. O dear friend of my infancy! be assured that no circumstance of my life shall make me forget the time we have passed together; when, free from all inquietude, we were only occupied in fulfilling our duty.— I now enter on a new career. I know that Cardinal Ruffo is a respectable man; but who can answer if I shall please him? Let me banish the unpleasant idea of not succeeding with his eminence, to transport myself in thought to Cezena. Yet, if imagination can bestow satisfaction, I shall rather fancy you here, that we run down yonder hill together, and admire

the gay landscape reflected in the limpid stream. I see you repose on a bank of moss, while I, according to custom, climb from rock to rock in search of stalactics, or of *Cornuæ Ammonis*, and a number of other trifles, which delight me so, and with which I fill my pockets all day to that degree, that I can scarce walk along in the evening ; yet I feel, were you near, my researches would be less tedious ;—that I should sit by you to enjoy the awful silence of the night, when nature in stillness seems to reflect how she shall prolong the existence of all beings till the morrow.—A gentle breeze

arises—the surface of the water is agitated—the noise of oars are heard—the crew land from a boat—we find many dear school-fellows, among others A** S** L**—how rejoiced we are to see them! The evening is spent in walking by the lake's-side; the next day they depart gaily for Cezena.—O that this dream could be realized! but of that I have not even a hope; and I must sorrowfully continue my rout, with no other society than my insensible fossils, and my thoughts, which are all on friendship.”

J. A. Braschi.

“Whoever should have told me at that time, that this letter was written by a man, destined to fill one of the most powerful thrones in Europe, would have surprised me much. In a short time, I received another letter from my friend, announcing his arrival at Rome. It contained the most interesting details of that city, so proud of its ancient power and magnificence, and which may now be named the city of ruins. But for Braschi it contained inestimable treasures. “O!” he exclaimed, on seeing those master-pieces of art, “if I were sovereign pontiff, I should employ part of my re-

venues in decorating a museum with fine antiques ; to which I should add a cabinet of natural history." What he then said, without the slightest idea of realizing, he executed during the first years of his reign.

" But it was not sufficient for Braschi to indulge the curiosity inspired by ancient Rome ; he was obliged to fulfil the intention of his parents, and get himself presented to Cardinal Ruffo. Mam. de Lambert says, " It is a great advantage to have nothing disagreeable in a man's appearance when he enters the world." Nature, every way so prodigal of

her favours to Braschi, had bestowed on him a majestic and graceful figure, and a countenance that fascinated every body at first sight. My friend was very favourably received by the Cardinal; who, from that time, occupied himself with the care of his advancement.

“Benedict XIV. then filled the papal chair: he possessed that rare genius which unites the most shining abilities for the conduct of important affairs, with great talents for belles lettres, and the happiest powers of conversation. I have heard those who had the advantage of being admitted to

his familiarity, agree, that they scarce ever met a more pleasing companion. His piety was not austere; his knowledge, not pedantic; nor his government oppressive;—toleration sat with him in the chair of St. Peter, and rendered religion more respectable. No Pope ever loved France more sincerely; and during his reign, there was not the least misunderstanding between Rome and that country. Yet he was not ignorant of the gross errors committed by the French Court; the consequences of which have been the expulsion of the reigning family. As he one day conversed with

Cardinal de Bernis, on the above subject, the former lamented the abuses, of which he foresaw the danger. "Notwithstanding your fears, and the faults you deplore, France will never lose its glory." "And who shall preserve it, please your holiness?" "Providence—who governs that kingdom."

"Cardinal Ruffo, who had a thorough knowledge of mankind, judging what Braschi would one day become, introduced him to Benedict XIV. saying, he made him a present. The Pope named him his secretary; and, in a short time after, young Braschi had an opportunity of proving himself

worthy that place, by the ingenious manner in which he answered Abbe Gagliani, who was charged by the Pope to make a collection of volcanic specimens. The Abbe sent a case of these curiosities, with a note, containing these words, "*Die ut lapides isti panis fiant.*"

"See here, (said Benedict XIV.) a strange abuse of scripture, which I desire you will answer."

"Braschi took up his pen and wrote as follows: "You do not doubt the pontiff's infallibility; I shall give you a proof of it. To me it appertains to explain the texts of the holy scriptures; and

to seize the true sense ;—which I have never done with more pleasure than on the present occasion.”

“ Benedict XIV. read, and signed the letter, to which he added a pension of eight hundred Roman crowns.

“ Knowing how to appreciate merit, he rewarded that of his secretary, by conferring on him one of those rich Canonicats, by means of which, he obtained a seat amongst the Prelates. “ I have began your fortune,” (said the Pontiff) “ it remains to you to finish it.”

“ Unfortunately for the happiness of Braschi, and the repose of Europe, Benedict XIV. died. He was generally regretted, especially in France. My friend shed the tears of sincerity over his tomb.

“ Clement XIII. was pious, but weak ; a zealous friend to the Jesuits, yet could not prevent their being expelled from France and Spain ; though not without great opposition from the Pontiff. But the time was passed when kingdoms trembled under the weight of ecclesiastical power ; they now despised the remonstrances of an old man, whose excommunications

they no longer feared; and who apprehended the loss of those two nations, the bulwarks of the Romish See. He therefore contented himself with shedding a few tears, and issuing a few bulls.

“The power of the chief of the church is like her—immortal; and he should remember these words, ‘Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church, and the powers of the earth shall not prevail against it.’ He should have only feared the destruction of the Jesuits; not fancied that their abolition would involve a power held from the Almighty.

The kings of France and Spain, far from being intimidated, became jealous of their authority, and banished from their territories an order, whose political existence is still a problem; but whose subversion has doubtless occasioned that of the first branch of the Bourbon family. I shall enlarge on this subject when I mention the total destruction of the order of Jesus, under Ganganelli.

“Clement XIII. ought to have found in his predecessor's secretary, a man according to his heart. His regularity in business, his fervent piety, should

have rendered him dear to the Pontiff; but it belongs only to genius to distinguish merit. Like the eagle, who can gaze at the sun undazzled, a great man is enlightened by the abilities of those that approach him, and partakes of the lustre of their talents, whose rays illumine all around. But Clement XIII. with all his virtues, had not that precious discernment, so necessary to those who govern; and Braschi had remained only a Prelate, were it not for a circumstance which he communicated to me in the following letter; where we may observe how far he was from any

idea to what cause he should one day owe his advancement.

“ ‘ *From J. Angelo Braschi to Marquis* ***.

“ ‘ RABIANI, NOV. 7, 1755.

“ ‘ Pardon me, dear Marquis, for having left your three letters so long unanswered ; but ever accustomed to let you read my heart, I did not dare write while I dreaded you should be acquainted with what passed in it. Your esteem is too dear to me to expose myself lightly to lose it, which, notwithstanding your indulgence, I fear would have been the case, had I informed you of an event that was likely to prove my destruction ; but the God of

all mercies has permitted me to escape the threatened danger.

“I have told you, that since the decease of Benedict XIV. my life was become burthensome. I endeavoured, in vain, by exercises of piety, to renew a vocation almost extinct; and yet I had no idea of greater felicity. Could you believe that my cabinet of natural history afforded me no pleasure; and that I entered it a hundred times, without being able to procure a moment's diversion of thought by removing the various objects that composed it. I found my bosom oppressed, my respiration ob-

structed; and saw nothing that could interest me. The perfect indifference with which I was treated by his holiness, rendered my attentions to him rather unpleasant than satisfactory; in fine, I was melancholy even unto death; and I doubt not, that were I an Englishman, or a disciple of modern philosophy, I had terminated my existence; but it is very certain I hastened towards its decline.

“ Cardinal Ruffo, who is very kind to me, attributed the alteration in my health, to the unwholesome air which the wind bears from the Pontine marshes

during some weeks; and invited me to his vineyard, where his niece and some friends expected him. I excused myself for some time, under the pretext of the duties of my station; but he said he would himself ask for my leave of absence, which, he added, would not be difficult to obtain, as I had not so much the confidence of Clement XIII. as of his predecessor.

“I then represented to his eminence, that I had but a slight acquaintance with his niece, and none with the ladies that accompanied her, and that I should therefore wait his going. ‘No,’

replied he with complacence, 'your situation makes me uneasy; I wish you to set off immediately; besides, you will find the Countess Falconieri a young woman of distinguished merit, who possesses great influence over the friends of his holiness, and, I doubt not, if you can procure her interest, but it might make your fortune. She is young, and virtuous; and has great credit at the vatican.' Won by so many marks of regard, and (shall I add) curious to see her, of whom I had heard such a favourable description, I determined to depart that evening. It was the month which

poets celebrate, even in those countries, where it seldom answers their description ; but you know how fine the weather is in our country ; the heat not excessive, and the country arrayed in all its beauty and splendour. One must pass a spring in Italy to have an idea of the delightful month of May, and the fascinating sensations it produces. We feel as if animated with all the benevolent tenderness the Almighty has bestowed on all living creatures, to protect and cherish each other. Ah ! it was at this dangerous period that I felt, for the first time, and, I hope,

for the last, whatever may be painful in celibacy ; never, said I, to breath those sighs that oppress my heart ; never to give my name to an amiable friend, and inseparable companion : how comfortless are the days of celibacy !

“ Lost in profound meditation, I strayed insensibly from the road, and found myself in a grove of sycamores ; a limpid stream flowed between the hills ; but this place was a deep solitude ; I could expect no hospitable door to open and receive me during the approaching night ; I seemed to stand alone in nature. So shall I see the evening of life approach,

destitute of the dearest connections:—I shall have none to love and console me. O Braschi ! O Braschi ! more wretchedness yet awaits thee. If solitude proves dangerous or painful, why gallop thy horse along the valley and seek the habitations of men. But when got into the vale of years, thou wilt be there hapless, alone, and none to help thee ; and when the tomb shall become thy asylum—there will be none to shed a tear over thy remains. O Braschi ! Braschi ! thou didst not feel what it was to renounce the delights of a mutual attachment. Wrapt in deep melan-

choly, I tied my horse to a tree, and entered a grotto to wait the returning sun. Sleep had fled from mine eyes, and my agitation was so violent, that I in vain sought a moment's repose. The nightingale's song, repeated by the echo, but increased my affliction.

““ As soon as Aurora appeared, I hastened from that silent retreat, to try if the dissipation of the journey would not divert my sorrow ; but the maladies of the soul, resemble those of its terrestrial abode, which change wholesomest aliments to poison.

“I had often seen, unenvied, the gay shepherds of our mountains; I pitied them for being only occupied with perishable cares, and exercise so little their mental faculties. Well, my dear Marquis, that day (which I cannot think on without humiliation) I thought them so happy, that I should have exchanged the *purple* for their russet grey, and the *Cardinal's cap* did not appear to me comparable to the straw hats of the rustic lasses.

“It was in this dangerous disposition of mind I arrived at the Cardinal's country residence. I told you I had a slight acquaint-

ance with his niece, who gave me a very polite reception, and I presented a letter from Cardinal Ruffo. After reading it, she said, 'My uncle puts you under my care, and that of my friends, for the recovery of your health.'—

'His eminence is too kind, and I am not worthy such physicians.'

'Our prescriptions are not painful,' said a beautiful woman, whom I took for the Countess Falconieri. Our eyes had met, and though I quickly averted mine, I felt how dangerous she would prove to my repose. But enough for to-day, my dear Marquis; I shall no longer trouble

you with my weakness ; know that I have triumphed over it, thanks to Madam Falconieri's virtues. The post hastens me : I shall send you a detail of particulars, the remembrance of which enchants and terrifies me. May you find a woman comparable to her who disdained not the pure homage I addressed her.— More fortunate than I, you will be at liberty to bestow on her your name ; to pass your days in her society :—but other blessings are designed for me, and among those I most prize, is your friendship.

J. A. Braschi."

From the same, to the same.

“I think my dear friend must be impatient to know how I have escaped guilt and wretchedness. It was by means very dangerous for any but Madam Falconieri to employ. You know, I was in a state of distraction before I saw her, whose rare beauty, and condescending reception, were not calculated to restore my reason. I forgot what I owed to myself; the sacred vows I had made to my Creator; and my duty to my parents, whose only hope was to see me, one day, obtain a distinguished place among the Roman clergy. I could not forbea

contemplating that beauty, of which the finest statue of ancient Greece, is, in my opinion, but a feeble representation. Marble and bronze may astonish by their regularity of feature, the ensemble, the proportions; but how slight an advantage, compared to the animated charms of living perfection. What are the eyes of the boasted Venus of Medicis but immoveable orbs? while the Countess's eyes every moment dart a fire that penetrates all hearts; and would be irrevocably fascinating, did she not temper their lustre by casting down her long eye-lashes, which

seem the vail thrown around the
 graces: and what are the colourless
 lips of a statue, when we behold
 those of a fine woman, half open,
 then close, and open again only
 to let fall the long-wished for
 words I love? I own I should
 have renounced all the beauties
 of art for those of nature. In
 fine, your friend was become a
 madman, given up to the most
 frantic passions; yet do not ima-
 gine I renounced the laws of de-
 cency by an avowal of it. The
 Countess was a divinity I adored
 in silence; constantly followed;
 and, when unobserved, gazed on
 those features, so soft, and so

noble, which bereaved me of rest. My health became infinitely worse than on my arrival at the Cardinal's: far from being alarmed, I saw my decline with infinite satisfaction. I thought, that when I ceased to live, I should cease to be culpable; and that I should then be at liberty to love the Countess, and wait her visiting the celestial regions. Senseless wretch that I was, I did not reflect that had I died in this state of mind I should be for ever banished the presence of the Omnipotent; but I could no longer distinguish between good and evil; a miracle alone could save me;

and that miracle only Madam Falconieri could have wrought. Her soul must have been as lovely as its enchanting envelope, to have taken pity of my torments, and led me into the path of virtue; which a fatal passion had made me forsake.

“The Cardinal's country house was situated near the sea; and every night I sat on a high rock, (at the foot of which the vapours rolled) beholding only a sheet of water, whose waves seemed alternately to attract and repel the clouds, aloft in air. I contemplated this sublime scene, where nature, like my heart, presented

but one image. I knew no place so well adapted to my dark meditations as this lone clift, where human foot had perhaps never trod.

“One evening, as I took my accustomed seat on the rock, absorbed in one thought alone, as my eyes wandered over the immense horizon, I fancied I heard a noise beneath; but what was my surprize, when I descried the Countess ascend the steep, followed by one of her women. I arose; so great was my astonishment, that I doubted if it was not an illusion met my eyes; I stammered a few words. ‘I

guessed you were here, and I am come to scold you.' 'Me, Madam, am I so happy as to engage any share of your attention? 'Was not I requested to be your physician?' 'In that case, Madam, you have been unsuccessful, I grow worse every day.' 'So I think you *must*, while you pass a great part of the night exposed to these vapours, more noxious than those of Rome.' 'Would to heaven they were still more fatal!' 'That is a humane wish; what have the peaceful inhabitants of this neighbourhood done to you, that you should desire their destruction?' 'I wish they

might prove so only to me.—
‘ Give me leave to ask, dear Sir,
what can render life so insupport-
able to you, who have such pros-
pects of happiness?’ ‘ Alas !
Madam, for him, who has vo-
luntarily excluded himself from
the society of the living, there is
no felicity on earth.’ ‘ You !
Braschi ! you believe yourself
excluded from society ! Who is
more formed to figure in it with
success : I shall not mention per-
sonal advantages, they are too
transitory to weigh in the scale
of reason ; but so much wit, so
much knowledge, and such op-
portunities of acquiring more.

At your age, a man is far from attaining the end to which all his actions should tend ; I dont mean in the sense of a frivolous world ; but in that of which a christian finds the model in his *Divine Master.* This word, uttered by the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, with an accent of such sensibility, and as if it were to recall me to myself, made the greater impression. As the shades of approaching night, seemed to cast a veil on all human weakness ; almost alone with the woman I idolized, endeavouring to recall me to the author of all perfection ; who suffered the

most painful and ignominious death, to shew us a pattern of that virtue, from which I had so far deviated; if not in action, at least in thought; as all mine tended to estrange me from the sacred vows I had taken, and to render void, if possible, those Madame Falconieri had made to her husband.

“ ‘ The Countess was well aware of my weakness, and undertook to cure it. The means she now employed, she thought necessary, not doubting but I should conquer my natural timidity, and make the avowal of a passion; which though so evident, she

could not otherwise combat ; what she foresaw happened ; I did not confine myself to vague lamentations, but said enough to leave the Countess no room to doubt the total loss of my reason.—‘ I understand you, (she replied,) better than I could wish ; but I shall not answer you here. To-morrow you will receive a letter from me ; which I request you to read with attention.’—‘ Any thing from you will be infinitely precious to my heart.’—‘ Sick, very sick, (said she rising,) but I shall perform a cure.’—‘ I hope so, but I do not flatter myself,’ answered I, following her in silence.

“ ‘When we were at the door of the Cardinal’s garden, she said with an arch, but goodnatured air, ‘Own that it was worth the trouble of going in search for you, to take you out of your dismals.’ — ‘Ah Madam! have pity on a sufferer, you promise to cure.— *Vorrei guarrire, mi è impossibile l’obbliar la, val meglio ch’io muora.*’

“ ‘I shall not allow you to die, nor forget me, as that would give me much concern; and we shall both be as happy as we can in this vale of misery.’ She gave me her hand, which I pressed to my lips; but I should as soon have insulted an angel, as have

harboured a thought, that could alarm her modesty.

“When we entered the drawing room, we were rallied on our *tête à tête*; the Countess answered the pleasantries of her friends, with a gaiety and simplicity, which proved the serenity of her soul, or the extreme command she had possessed over her feelings: while I, embarrassed, and reddening like a school boy, wished myself a hundred feet under ground.

“The remainder of the evening was passed very unpleasantly, in my extravagant opinion; I never found the Countess

so beautiful ; the harmony of her soul, was depicted in her countenance ; and her large black eyes expressed the happiness which accompanies the desire of doing a good action. She sung, and to me her voice was celestial ;—ashamed, distracted, I ran and shut myself up in my chamber : my valet knocked in vain ; yet he heard me walk fast across the apartment, and from some words I let fall in the violence of passion, he drew his conjectures ; and I heard him distinctly say, as he went away, ‘ he is composing a sermon, I must not interrupt him ;’ and he retired ; but the lesson

was not lost upon me. I sighed, to think how happy I should be to merit, at that moment, the opinion my old domestic entertained of me; and made a resolution to calm my agitation, and wait the Countess's letter, of which I send a copy; and you must allow that I cannot pay greater homage to that lady's virtue, than by communicating the proof of it. There are few women, of whose letters on the like occasion, we can say the same; as in general, when they even refuse our adorations, they seem to think we should continue it:— But where is the woman to be

compared to Madam Falconieri?
read and judge. Yours,

J. A. Braschi."

*Countess Falconieri's Letter to Monsignor
Braschi.*

" " I promised my amiable friend, yes, my amiable friend! What is there so astonishing in that expression? are you not the friend of Cardinal Ruffo, of my uncle, my sisters, my mother, who notwithstanding her great age, often says, what a charming Prelate, is that young Braschi; so it is certain you are our friend, and you are amiable; what more is necessary to turn some heads. Were you a Colonel, I own I

should have much difficulty to preserve mine; and at the risk of *rivalities*, should be delighted to see you the first on the list, of those who were struck with my feeble attractions; which in fact, are nothing more than the great consideration I enjoy, and the credit attached to it. No, my dear Braschi, I should not wish you were confounded with the importunate crowd; my heart would soon have learnt to distinguish you; you would by your kind attention have made my life agreeable, which is far other than it appears.

“ Unhappy in the interior of

my family, united to a man I cannot love; I should have found in yours a heart which would repay that tenderness of mine; I should have respected my vows, and carefully avoided all occasion of forgetting them; and while I remembered what I owed to Mr. Falconieri, you would have been the friend of my heart; such my dear Braschi, were my sentiments, so great was the impression you made on me the first day I saw you; and was it not for the habit you wear, I should perhaps, have been more unfortunate than you. For you will allow, that when a woman loves, it is for

life. Her attachment is her only sentiment; glory, ambition, all give place to love. The care of their country, often separates men from the object of their affection, and absence lessens, if it does not extinguish their passion. While the faithful mistress grieves, sighs, weeps, and courts the moments 'till her lover's return, which she thinks hastened by the ardour of her vows.

“ ‘ But how far were you and I from being able to give ourselves up to these sentiments. Do you think me, dear Braschi, so audacious, as to become the rival of God; to whom you are

consecrated? Shall I oppose a profane passion to the love of Charity, that daughter of Heaven, with which your heart ought to be enflamed? No, no, I esteem you too much not to be convinced, that this error is an illusion of your senses, which will hardly make an epoch in your life; and that restored to yourself, to your duty, you will only retain of the momentary impression I have made, that calm sensation, which renders friendship so amiable between the sexes, while it does not grow to love. But we have nothing to fear, as we shall vanquish the enemy of our repose

on the first attack ; and thinking on the many happy hours we have yet to come, we shall from this moment enjoy that tender attachment founded on esteem, which is generally the fruit of benevolence.

“ ‘ But I wish this attachment to be as constant as pure ; from this moment Braschi is my brother ; my beloved brother ; his interest and fortune are mine ; and I shall employ all my credit and influence, to obtain for him that place, to which his merit alone would conduct him, if merit in this age received its reward.

“ ‘ Let me hear of no more

walks to the sea shore, no longer centre your faculties in one idea; but my friend, endeavour to recover your health and spirits; return to your usual occupations, your serious studies, and recreations; and leave me the care of adorning you with the purple, when my exertions shall have obtained for you the fortune necessary for wearing it with splendour. *Ad dio mio carissimo amico."*

From

*Monsignor Braschi, to the Marquis ***.*

" ' You have doubtless concluded, my dear friend, that this letter had on me the effect it was

intended to produce. I blushed at being outdone by a woman ; for I could not doubt, that the Countess had shared my sentiments ; and from her respect to religion, had conquered and softened them to a friendship as pure as her soul. I resolved to follow her example ; and what cannot steadfast determination surmount ? I shall not describe what efforts it cost me. Heaven in fine, has aided my weakness. I can behold her without danger, my friend ; yet I plainly perceive she avoids all opportunity of private converse ; adopting the sage maxim, ‘He that loveth danger, shall

perish therein;' yet she seems carefully to conceal her design, lest it should afflict me. Company does not constrain me; as ours is only the intercourse of souls, I can freely enjoy her conversation. Her women (who are in general our companions) only speak Italian, which leaves us at liberty to express our sentiments in French; how sublime are those of the Countess! She gives a dignity to love unknown to grosser souls; I may say, her ideas give a foretaste of celestial joys. Yes, in these conversations I have thought myself divested of the burthen of humanity; and

sometimes, enchanting as is the beauty of Madam Falconieri, I feel more delighted with the charms of her mind. I am a thousand times too happy, my dear friend; I desire nothing; and I think so much felicity does not often fall to the share of a son of Adam: yet the Countess pretends to add to it, by a great fortune. I think the one incompatible with the other, but she must do as she pleases. The office of Treasurer, will soon be vacant; she intends to demand it from his Holiness for me; but will he like to confer it on the secretary of Benedict XIV.?

“ ‘ Already sufficiently rich from the generosity of my first master, I should prefer a tranquil life, spent in the study of the arts; but my friend thinks that every man should exert his abilities, and endeavour to attain the situation, which would place him in the most advantageous light: but how will this ambition appear in the sight of God? Alas, all is danger in this world. Your profession, my dear Marquis, demands less perfection than mine; and I believe there will be more soldiers saved, than individuals of my cloth: yet I wish, my dear friend, that we may

rest in the same place, and enjoy together the felicity our Creator has prepared for his elect.

Adieu, dear friend.

J. A. Braschi."

"You see by this letter, that my illustrious friend had not the remotest expectation of the Pontificate, nor would without the persuasions of the Countess have aspired to the honour of the purple. Soon after this, I made a journey to Rome, with which I shall entertain you to-morrow, if my recital continues to interest you." I assured him of my thanks, and we separated with a lively desire on my side, to meet next day.

CHAP. IV.



A VIOLENT storm (which to those accustomed to the sublime thunder of the Apennines, appeared but a slight squall) prevented my waiting on the Marquis. That good old gentleman suspecting the cause of my failing in my engagement, came to me. I received him with all the respect his age and his manners inspire; and inquired, if he had not been

frightened by the storm? “No Madam; I used, when a boy to fire Indian crackers, and thought the explosion like a round of artillery. So you Parisans imagine a few exhalations (which die away ere they have reached the earth) the *terrific bolts of Jupiter*. Ah! had you seen like me, the clouds rush against each other with fury, and break at your feet with tremendous roar, and the sluices of Heaven let loose precipitate enormous rocks, the hand of time had respected; had you heard the echos prolong the dreadful clang of these vast masses, as they swept away in

their fall, the pine and sycamore that grew in the bosom of the mountain; then you would have seen nature truly great and terrible. What you now call a storm, you would term a faint rumbling in the clouds, accompanied with a mist." 'But, said I, our mist might drench me in rain, and one slight concussion in the air, have produced electric matter sufficient to reduce me to ashes; and though your storms may be more terrible, ours are enough so, to make it prudent to stay at home:' but I thank my cowardice, since it procures me the pleasure of seeing you.—Fruit

and creams were served ; and after obtaining a promise from the Marquis, to pass the night with us, we went to my boudoir, where he seated himself between my sister and me : she was no stranger to the subject of our conversation, having read my notes ; and our friend then continued, as follows.

“ I mentioned to you Madam, that friendship, more than curiosity, induced me to make a journey to Rome ; Braschi would permit me to lodge no where but at his house ; and I found him as unaffected and amiable as in his youthful years. His taste was

the same, and his leisure hours employed as formerly ; his museum was more valuable than that he owned at Cezena ; yet I am persuaded he would have readily sacrificed it to relieve the distressed, were his fortune not considerable enough to satisfy that first wish of his heart. But Madam Falconieri has kept her word ; splendid benefices were now added to his former possessions : dignities unaccompanied by riches, did not appear to the Countess worthy her friend, as he informed me some years before.

“ The place of Treasurer becoming vacant ; Madam de Fal-

conieri procured it for my dear friend ; it could not have fallen into juster or more able hands ; and when no longer responsible, he had full power over the finances ; he never abused it ; and was feared only by knaves, who hated him, concealed from his knowledge their most trifling transactions, and were so sensible of his penetration and discernment, that they used to say of him—

A denti per masticare,

E buon naso, per sentire.

Good teeth has he his meat to chew,
And nose like any fox hound—true.

“ I hate (said my friend) those
who enrich themselves by the

oppression of whole provinces. What an infamous calculation that, of which the result is the misery and destruction of our fellow creatures ! Braschi sent all remonstrances directed to him, to the Cardinal Chamberlain, from whom redress was always obtained.

“ One day as we walked in the environs of Rome, a poor woman timidly demanded alms: (though born in a country where mendicity is almost inherent, I have always felt a sort of contempt for those who employ this means for support.) I passed the woman unheeded ; ‘ Ah Signor Braschi ! (said she) will you neither have

pity on us ; but suffer my children and I to die of hunger ?’

“ ‘ It is now twenty-four hours since I have tasted a morsel ; a law-suit with the apostolic See has ruined us ; my husband is dead ;—and if you have no compassion on us, we must die.’ So much was not necessary to move the tender heart of Braschi ; and made me blush for my insensibility. My friend made no answer, but taking out his pencil, wrote a few words. The afflicted mother, her hands clasped, her eyes riveted on those of the Treasurer, seemed to expect all from his goodness, notwithstanding his

air of indifference. She was not mistaken ; ‘ You have not eaten these twenty hours, (said he) go to yonder farm among the poplars, shew this paper, and all your wants will be supplied for three days. In the mean time let me see the papers relative to your law-suit ; if you were cast wrongfully, it will be easy to obtain justice, and I shall defray the expence ; but go, go to the farm, and restore your exhausted frame by repose.

“ The poor woman seemed at a loss to express her gratitude ; and I was happy to find my friend still the same. ‘ I have

(said he, when the woman took her road to the farm) found a method to succour the distressed without being a dupe to the idle. There are four apartments in all my farms, destined for the refuge of the indigent during three days; they are not *obliged* to work; but those who take advantage of this momentary asylum, without employing their industry to express their gratitude, I look upon as indolent and ungrateful; they receive a Roman crown, with a prohibition to return. On the contrary, those who occupy themselves some-how to shew a sense of the benefits then

have received, I busy myself in providing a livelihood for, in which I seldom fail; and am seconded by my incomparable friend, with a zeal that belongs only to the softer sex.'

"I admired the bounty and prudence of my friend, and requested he would acquaint me how the poor mother behaved.

—That very evening she laid her papers before the Treasurer, who got them examined by an advocate; it was evident the wretched family had been defrauded; and Braschi brought the cause to another hearing. The *three days trial* turned out also

to the advantage of the unfortunate woman. She and her children endeavoured to render themselves as useful as possible to the farmer's wife; and the Countess had them placed in a convent until their property was restored; which happened in a short time, from the interest Braschi took in the affair. Thus did these compassionate friends render their union respectable to the indigent, whose wants they ever studied to relieve. Woe to those who calumniate an attachment so pure! during two years spent with them in intimate society, I never saw any thing that

did not deserve the highest praise, nor that would give rise to the slightest suspicion; and black must be the malice, that has unavailingly attempted to tarnish the lustre of their virtues.

“ If I had followed the impulsion of my heart, I should have settled at Rome; but the interest of my family, and the request of my aged father especially, obliged me to quit the friend of my infancy; not without a promise to him and the Countess, one day to return, and finally establish myself near them.

“ I had scarce reached Cesena, when the violent disputes between

the Jesuits and the different powers of Europe, which had so much alarmed Clement XIII. commenced ; my friend shared this inquietude. He was sincerely attached to that order ; and I should be tempted to believe, with reason, if I may judge from the individuals with whom I was acquainted, whose amiable manners, and condescending piety, endeared them to their disciples. Almost all the Jesuits were men of letters ; and some in France were of distinguished abilities : a prepossessing address was universal among the order ; and a desire to please seemed to be for them

a fourth vow, to which they invariably adhered.

“Braschi, who did not think devotion consisted in greasy hair and slovenly dress, was naturally partial to men of enlightened understanding; and whose manners, though not worldly, had a certain engaging urbanity, which delighted all who enjoyed their intimate acquaintance. I am not sufficiently versed in theology to determine if these doctrines were sound; and should believe that their morals, too relaxed in some points, and fanatical in others, might be dangerous. But were it not possible to reform, rather than destroy?

Alas! we see in our days that it is easier to demolish than to repair. Heaps of ruins do not convey the idea of the power of a nation. To construct fine edifices is the pride of man: to destroy, the pleasure of childhood.

“In fine, the kings of Spain and Portugal abolished in their kingdoms that order, whose numerous convents extended all over the earth: people at first imagined its fall was but momentary, and that it must again be re-established, as in France, on account of its great utility for the education of youth. But Providence, who makes use of the

follies of men to accomplish his wise purposes, suffered the secular powers to exert the preponderancy the new philosophical opinions gave them over the spiritual leaders, in extorting their consent to the destruction of an order, which, though they were not aware of it, constituted one of the firmest basis of temporal authority.

“ Yet Clement XIII. could never be prevailed upon to consent to the abolition of the Jesuits, to whom he was extremely partial; and the esteem which Braschi entertained for them, increased their influence towards

the end of Rezzonico's reign : yet Braschi was not among the Zelanti.*

“ His gentleness and moderation were incompatible with the violence of party spirit, which made him experience the fate of those who in turbulent times are not carried away by the vortex of faction. His wisdom was called indifference; and as he sided neither with the crowned heads, nor the Pope, he lived in a species of disgrace during the pontificate of Ganganelli.

* The Cardinals and Prelates were so called, who were zealous advocates for the immunities in the Church of Rome.

“ The affliction suffered by Rezzonico, at the misfortunes of the Jesuits, hastened his dissolution : he died in the beginning of the year 1769. The influence of the House of Bourbon, which Cardinal Bernis knew how to employ, gave the majority of votes to Ganganelli. This choice had been fortunate, if the operation of affairs were not precipitated, which, conducted with prudence, would have been attended with success. But it seemed as if certain kings had a presentiment of the loss of their power, and therefore hastened to exert it.” — ‘It appears to me, (said I) that the pontifi-

cate of Ganganelli presents important events to those who wish to enter into any detail concerning that extraordinary personage. But the night advances, and late hours might prove injurious to your health, I request you will favor ~~me~~ with particulars relative to that Pontiff tomorrow after breakfast.'—"Madam, your will is my law," answered the Marquis, and he retired.

CHAP. V.

Braschi made Cardinal.

NEAR my humble retreat was an harbour, adorned by the hand of Nature, with the earliest leaves of spring; it united all that could please the senses; the verdant carpet perfumed the air with sweets, the chequered light that played among the branches cheered the eye, and the vocal tenants

of the grove seemed by their enchanting notes to vie with the most celebrated artists in charming the ear. It was in this rural abode I prepared tea for the Marquis *****, who soon followed, accompanied by my sister. I had ordered my children to come, who skipped around with a favourite lamb. 'Here is a breakfast that tempts one to partake of it, (said the good old gentleman) this harbour is delicious, yet it is unfortunate that all here announces something of the Anglo-mania, so fatal to your country, that I am surprised you have not banished every fashion

appertaining to your dangerous neighbours.'—'That would be adding another folly to those already committed. In fine, if English customs have introduced a philosophy, of which the result has been so pernicious, they are not the less innocent and agreeable. Take a cup of tea, my dear friend, we shall not be less the enemies of dangerous innovations for finding this beverage pleasant. My children are clad and nourished as Rousseau recommends; yet I am far from intending they shall learn the principles of *Emile*. But I adopt what is eligible wherever I find it, as I think that the best

mode of advancing in the empire of reason.'

"Such were the sentiments of Ganganelli; he thought he might safely emerge from the proud ignorance of his predecessors, and welcome the learned of all sects and opinions. Philosophers made Europe resound with the cry of toleration, while they themselves were the most intolerant of men. Shall I give you my sentiments of the French Revolution? It may be regarded as an experiment on mankind, and has served to demonstrate truths which would have remained buried in philo-

sophical prejudices, fanatical as those of religion.

“For more than half a century it was pretended, that religion rendered men cruel; that it had shed torrents of blood; that of the martyrs was forgotten, and such was the phrenzy as to imagine, that men could never be happy 'till divested of what was called the *dotage of their forefathers*. These philosophic reveries have been realized, and the affrighted waves have rolled in their waters, tinged with blood, the bodies of our countrymen.

“The advocates of the new doctrines advanced, that men had

only to be acquainted with their own interest, to walk in the paths of virtue; and that the fear of chastisement was useless to a thinking being. Then followed the years of anarchy, when mankind were near becoming a gang of banditti, who, after slaughtering all those that had the courage to oppose them, would have torn each other to pieces; therefore was it found necessary again to recur to penal laws, to restrain those self-created sages. Let us now mention the system of equality. How has this equality succeeded, the idea of which appeared so beautiful and interesting

in the minds of our innovators? How has it terminated? Has it not taught men that there is but one general law, as well as one faith; that this law must protect, without distinction, all the members of the body politic? Reason had applauded this language, even had it been asserted that all had an equal right to the confidence of their countrymen; that where merit was equal, birth and riches should not be preferred to talents and virtue. This is undeniable; and notwithstanding the opposition of pride, the precept must have been adopted. But when, instead of reforming abuses,

this pretended system of equality consisted in pulling down all that was elevated, and elevating all that was debased; confounding the fantastic institutions of vanity with the testimonies of honor due to merit; trampling equally under foot, the statues of the most illustrious men, and those raised by servile adulation; and regardless of age or sex, devoting indiscriminately to the revolutionary axe, virtue, vice, opulence, misery, talents, and stupidity. Yet the disseminators of these principles were well received by Louis XVI. The unfortunate Louis, whose grave was dug by modern

philosophers, treated them with bounty, inheriting not that horror, with which their dauntless corruption had inspired his predecessor.

“Joseph II. went so far as to be guided entirely by their advice, and began the destruction of the Jesuistical order, which was a prelude to that of all legitimate authority in France.

“It is not surprising that kings, surrounded by wicked and designing men, (who endeavoured to lessen the authority of the church, to establish their own) should not perceive the snare that was laid at their feet. But that

a sovereign pontiff, to whom the preservation of ecclesiastical power was of such importance, should consent to the destruction of an order, which was its firmest support, appears the height of imprudence. With the utmost repugnance, the unhappy Ganganelli acceded to the entreaties of the kings of France, Spain, and Portugal, for the suppression of the Jesuits, which had been ineffectually solicited in the reign of Rezzonico. Braschi, who concurred in his opinion, dared to make a proposal, that met the approbation of France. It was a reformation of the institution,

The proposal was made to the General of the Order, who answered thus,—*Sint ut sunt, aut non sint.* A reply which some people construed into excessive pride, others thought it the exclamation of innocence.

“My friend was so persuaded of the latter opinion, that it increased his esteem for the order, and he looked on the suppression of the Jesuits, as an injustice. These sentiments, which he did not conceal, were little calculated to obtain the confidence of Clement XIV. and these two personages, destined by providence to fill the same place, and whose

mutual love for the fine arts tended to unite, *esteemed*, but did not *like* each other.

"The pontiff could not, however, resist the pressing solicitations which Madam Falconieri knew so well how to employ for her friend, and conferred on Braschi the Cardinal's cap. This honor made no change in his manners: you shall see what he wrote to me on the occasion."

*"Cardinal Braschi to the Marquis
de *****.*

"Behold me, YOUR EMINENCE, my dear friend; this title reminds me of the tales with which we were lulled to sleep in our

infancy, that told of a giant, who descended on the earth, from a planet, much larger than this world : this huge man walked across the sea, which scarcely reached his ankle. He one day perceived some inequalities in the ground, which he took for shells, 'till finding they adhered to the earth, he concluded they must be the famous Alps, which he had read of in a great book he met with in his country ; and it also mentioned the Alps as the highest mountains in Europe, at which he could not refrain from laughing. Is it not the same, my friend, with regard to

the title of Eminence; and were we on a level with kings, what is their grandeur in comparison of the celestial powers. Heaven forbid I should pride myself on a title, which confers nothing more than a privilege of aiding his holiness with my advice; this obligation will not be difficult to fulfil, as I shall certainly not be called to his privy council, and therefore shall not feel any conflict between my conscience and the gratitude I owe Clement XIV. for having arrayed me in the purple. The Countess is much more rejoiced at my elevation than myself. She says I must

one day become Pope, and make a marriage between one of my nephews and her daughter. I hope it may not please Providence to realize these wishes; but I need be under no uneasiness, for Ganganelli is little older than me, and if I should chance to survive him, I will not certainly solicit a throne, whose temporal and spiritual empire daily decrease. I believe its power will only end with this sublunary world; but I fear the times of persecution will commence, and I do not yet feel myself equal to become a martyr.

“In the mean time, my dear

friend, I insist on your performing your promise, to accept an apartment in my palace, poor Braschi's palace ! Do you remember when we were at college, who would have thought that I should become a Cardinal; that I should have a fine palace ? May I be happy there, and assemble in it all that are dear to me. Pray remember me to our friends, and mention particularly that nothing should be spared in the education of my nephews, whom I love as if they were my children. The Countess desires me to say a thousand kind things for her ; she is ever the best, the

most virtuous, and most amiable of women.

J. A. Braschi."

" I did not delay making a visit to the new Cardinal, who received me with all possible cordiality; and I found that his last letter had expressed the genuine sentiments of his soul. He only rejoiced in having means to assist the unfortunate Jesuits, the Pope having just signed the bull for their suppression. His palace, which appeared some months before too vast, he now thought too small; because it could not contain all the disciples of Loyola, who held a place in his heart.

I remarked, that this conduct might give umbrage to the Pontiff, as sovereigns do not like even a tacit disapprobation of their conduct. 'It may not, (added I) be more pleasing to Ganganelli than others, and you may lose all credit with him.' 'That is of little importance, interrupted my friend, if my disgrace is not merited; and whoever would not incur a sovereign's disapprobation, to relieve his friends, is not worthy the name of man.'

"What I had foreseen came to pass; whether from fear of the courts of Spain, France, and

Portugal, to whom he was entirely devoted, or dissatisfaction at Braschi's sensibility to the misfortunes of the Jesuits, Clement XIV. entirely excluded that Cardinal from his council. My friend supported this disgrace like one who felt himself superior to the transient favours of fortune, and was never so happy as during the years that preceded his election to the pontifical chair.

“ A fortune sufficient to gratify his favourite wish (beneficence), a circle of chosen friends, and leisure to cultivate his taste for the arts, which never forsook him to his latest breath, all

conspired to render him the happiest of men. His virtue and moderation prolonged the vigour of youth, and I may add its graces, for his countenance was yet handsome, which his neatness, and peculiar attention to his toilette, (though not unbecoming his gravity) rendered still more engaging. His enemies reproached him with *too* great care of his person; but I never found him in the least reprehensible in that respect. Have not all animals (excepting a few who seem the refuse of nature) received an instinct of cleanliness? Do not birds pick their feathers, and quadrupeds lick

their fur? Why should man alone, who was made after the likeness of God, think it honoring their creator to disfigure his image, by wearing the livery of squalid misery, which is often taken by hypocritical pride, to obtain respect.

“ But nothing proves the lustre of my friend’s virtue better than the puerile reproaches to which his enemies were obliged to have recourse, to tarnish it. That Braschi, so falsely depicted by some, possessed the esteem of Cardinal Bernis, who had a profound knowledge of mankind, and I will show you a letter from

his Eminence (whose name alone is an eulogium) where he draws my friend in the truest colours, when he mounted the papal throne. The authority of *one* man of distinguished merit, ought to weigh against all the attempts of a thousand individuals, excited by their own malevolent passions, combined with those of others, to blacken the character of Pius VI. The leisure which his removal from the council offered my friend, gave him the idea of the museum, whose riches at present adorn that of Paris; but it is not less true, that the praise of collecting them belongs to the

Cardinal. The statue of the Apollo of Belvedere, the admiration of ages, was by him, in concert with the Pontiff, removed from a court adjoining the Vatican, to a building expressly raised for the reception of antiques. If a profane idea may be allowed a place in the life of a Pope, it might be said, that the image of the God of the Arts had the same power over the marble, that the Grecians accorded to the son of Latona; and that at his voice, the muses assembled round his statue, offering the most beautiful productions of ages.

“ Braschi divided his time between his friends and the fine arts, and hoped to end his career in this delicious *far niente*, of which it is not given to every body to know the value, and which must not be confounded with that apathy which sees the day rise, and finish, without having performed one useful action. Having no occupation prescribed by duty, my friend passed his hours in study, the cultivation of the muses, and the relief of the indigent; and had been too blest, if the necessity the Catholic courts were under to find a man of moderation (to succeed Ganganelli)

had not forced him to mount the papal throne, to become the victim of misfortunes, greater than those ever experienced by any other pontiff.

“ That the primitive successors of St. Peter should have suffered martyrdom, is not matter of surprise, when we consider, that in their time idolatry sat on the throne. But at a period when all Europe professes Christianity, and most of its kingdoms acknowledge the Pope as the visible vicar of Christ, that a persecution, raised under the name of philanthropy, should tear the most venerable of Pontiffs, the

most worthy and respectable of men, from the bosom of his flock, and drag him from town to town, 'till he found his tomb in a country, relapsed into barbarism. This is what posterity must consider as one of the indelible stigmas of the French revolution.

“ But I am yet far from these disastrous times, in describing which, I have promised to omit nothing relative to the situation of my illustrious friend, who was a striking example of the vicissitudes of fate. To-morrow, if you will honour my asylum, I shall give you an account of the death of Ganganelli, the agita-

tions of the conclave, and the ascension of the friend of my youth to the papal throne." On saying this, the Marquis took his leave.

CHAP. VI.

II Repaired to the retreat of the Marquis, as we had agreed, who received me with his accustomed cordiality; yet his countenance expressed unusual gravity, and his features bore the traces of profound sorrow. I inquired with concern the cause of his affliction. "Painful remembrances, and the reflection that had not my friend embraced the ecclesi-

astical state, he might have lived happy, and died regretted, in his native country, by his friends and acquaintance. Whereas, during the longest Pontificate recorded in history, he never enjoyed a moment's repose, I may say, good fortune. He was incessantly tormented by the philosophical sects, who secretly aimed at undermining all power. Providence suffered them to subvert, for a short time, the authority of the sovereign Pontiff, to shew to the world that the strength of the Church, and of her chief, derive from the Almighty, who will doubtless raise her with glory,

however fallen she may appear. The sufferings of my unfortunate friend were not the less, and he supported them with a resignation that excited the compassion of the most violent enemies of the papal throne.

“ It cannot then be surprizing, that in recalling such afflicting events I should yet feel deeply affected.

“ I have perhaps already informed you (for at my age one repeats) that although Ganganelli was not a friend to the Jesuits, he signed their suppression with the utmost repugnance:—‘ I have signed my own death warrant,’

said he, to the French and Spanish ministers. This presentiment continually haunted his mind, and the worthy pastor, who would have gathered all the stray sheep of his flock into the same fold, believed himself surrounded by mercenaries, employed for the most atrocious purpose.

“Deprived of the innocent enjoyments of a table, where he might have assembled the most distinguished men of Rome, he dared not taste the viands prepared in his kitchen, and was reduced to depend on the abilities of a franciscan friar, in whose fidelity he confided to dress his

daily meals. Thus, the gentlest, the most affable of men, was tortured by the idea that there was a design against his life. Continual apprehension, joined to Ganganelli's great application to business, gradually brought on a decline, which abridged his life. Such is the opinion of those who do not charge the Jesuits with the death of one of the most interesting men of his age. Others do not scruple to assert that Ganganelli's dissolution was hastened by a crime too dreadful to relate. They pretend that a priest dared to abuse his awful function, to serve the purpose of the blackest

vengeance; but could a minister of peace, one who is a mediator between God and man, have the wickedness to imbibe with slow poison, that bread which at his voice was to become the body of his Divine master, whom he in a manner called to be a witness of his murder. No, no, atrocious wretch! if such was thy project, do not flatter thyself that God himself was the accomplice of thy turpitude. The Divinity never invests himself in sullied bread, and life and death cannot be received at the same time.

“The pious Ganganelli suffered with great fortitude the anguish

of a long and painful malady, and regretted only the good he might yet have done on earth; and his last vows were for peace amongst all Christians; little foreseeing the storm that was gathering over the head of his successor, and of which his tolerating spirit was one of the causes.

“ Yet the troubles that arose in the conclave made it evident how difficult it would be for the successor of Clement XIV. to conciliate all parties, without giving up the interests of Rome. The authors of the divisions that preceded the election of that Pontiff knew the importance of

nominating a Pope of their respective party, and left no means untried to ensure success.

“The zelanti had the advantage in number; the adherents of foreign powers in talents. I shall not mention those who veered alternately from one faction to another. You know that our friend Cardinal Giraud, was talked of as a candidate. His residence in France had given him the confidence of the court, who wished him chief of the Church.” “I remember it perfectly,” (replied I) “and also recollect, that one of my relations, who was handsome, lively, and much in the world,

was delighted at the prospect of having a friend on the papal throne. She already saw herself empowered to give us indulgences, and actually got (in secret) a congratulatory letter, penned by some parasite, to his holiness: but alas! her plans were deranged, and news came to Paris that Braschi was Pope.' "I can assure you, Madam, he was as much disappointed by his nomination, as your friend could be at the non-election of Cardinal Giraud; who, whether he had no hope of success himself, or that he feared the sacred sovereignty, was Braschi's warmest advocate,

having twice wrote his name on the list, while my friend seemed rather to dread than desire the tiara; and it is very certain, that if he had not thought his refusal an opposition to the design of Providence, he would have preferred the tranquility he had enjoyed for some years to the burthen of papacy. I repeat *the will of Providence*, in spite of the supercilious smile of the incredulous, who say, with Fra Paolo*, that the Holy Ghost arrived at the conclave, in the portmanteaus of the French and Spanish couriers, and of those of other states.

* History of the council of Trent.

It is not the less certain the Almighty accomplishes his designs, not always by miracles, but by swaying the heart of man. Providence is the only visible cause of whatever fixes our attention, or appears unworthy our regard; all is foreseen, all forms a part in the immensity of time: and when Bernis and Monino opposed the designs of the zelanti, who, on their side, set up the Colonna, the Castelli, the Boschi, God mocked their long debates, and determined them in favor of the man his wisdom had decreed, on whom he had bestowed extreme gentleness of mind, and

fortitude to resist all the attempts of innovators ; him on whom he had poured his spirit even in infancy. In fine, John Angelo Braschi united all suffrages.

“The moment the election of John Braschi was proclaimed in the Paulin chapel, he threw himself on his knees, and offered up a prayer so affecting that the spectators were moved to tears ; then addressing himself thus to the cardinals :—

“Venerable Fathers, the conclave is now broke up, but how unfortunate the result for me.’

“After the ceremony called the adoration, he embraced Cardinal

de Bernis, with these words :

‘To you I owe this burthen, and I hope for your council to enable me to support it.’

“To Cardinal Mark Antony :

‘If the sacred college had been just, you should sit in my place.’

“To Cardinal Pallavicini: *‘It is your extreme diffidence that has caused my elevation.’*

“To Cardinal Negroni: *‘You had the wish of the crowned heads as well as me.’*

“These flattering expressions were the spontaneous effusions of the new Pontiff’s mind, not the vain formula of pretended humility.

“ His conduct proved his sincerity, in continuing Cardinal Pallavicini in the office of secretary ; in confiding the datary's office to Cardinal Negroni ; and the place of secretary of holy bulls to Cardinal Conti ; in often consulting Cardinal Bernis, and always following his advice. It was observed that from that time the greatest intimacy subsisted between these two personages, and that his holiness honoured the Cardinal with many public testimonies of deference and attachment. The court of France was then the prototype of that of Rome : Pius VI. felt the necessity

of the friendship of that court, and wished to secure its support.

“The Cardinals in foreign kingdoms soon learned the election of Pius VI. You shall hear what Cardinal de Bernis wrote to the cabinet of Versailles on the subject.

“Cardinal Braschi has been raised to the chair of St. Peter, which it is believed he will worthily fill; at least the public has hitherto entertained the most favourable opinion of him. No one can dispute his learning, piety, and love of his duty.

“When young he obtained the confidence of Benedict XIV.

who opened to him the career of honors. In the reign of Clement XIII. he enjoyed great credit and consideration; and though he concurred in that Pontiff's sentiments with regard to the Jesuits, he was never accused of fanaticism.

“ By Clement XIV. he was created Cardinal, though that Pope was prejudiced against him by some malevolent persons. He suffered his disgrace in silence, and seemed only to remember the benefits he had received.

“ At the commencement of the conclave he saw with indifference the project of his election

fall almost as soon as formed. In short, his whole conduct displays candour, blended with courageous firmness, prudence, and moderation. Yet one dare not answer for the result of events which may have certain consequences, nor for the change that great unexpected elevation may operate on the character, understanding, and habits of men. God alone can read the human heart; we can only judge by appearances. The reign of the new Pope will evince if previous to his election we saw his face, or his mask.

“ Braschi was proclaimed sove-

reign Pontiff in February, 1775. Thus did two princes mount the throne nearly at the same period, the termination of whose reigns was almost equally unfortunate. Louis XVI. succeeded his grandfather, May 10, 1774; and the same epocha which saw the one receive the revenues of a great empire, beheld the other in possession of those of the Church; nor was this the only similarity in the fate of these sovereigns: their enemies, who could find them guilty of no crimes, invented such as they themselves were alone capable of perpetrating; and not content with employing

the most odious calumny to blacken these illustrious personages, they sought to stigmatize their domestic conduct, accusing of harshness, amounting to brutality, these princes, the basis of whose character was benign gentleness.

“The hirelings of the new philosophy could not pretend (as of Louis XVI.) that *Braschi* was destitute of those exterior graces which command love and respect before we know whether the objects deserve them; but they represented these frivolous advantages in him as a crime, and fearing the imposing majesty of his air would counteract their

project of exposing him, like Jesus Christ, to the derision of the soldiers; they wished him the diminutive stature and simple monastic mien of his predecessor, so ill calculated to awe the multitude, whose imagination always represents their masters as of a nature superior to their own. Thus does Malice avail herself of contrary qualities in her objects, to effect their undoing.

“ Louis XVI. (said this offspring of hell) seemed formed by nature for nothing more than a rich labourer. Braschi, whom nature had endowed with personal beauty, a sonorous voice, and

perfect grace of gesture, was by her denominated a sacred histrio.

“O men! will you never judge but from the passions of others, and leave to posterity to appreciate the merit of your cotemporaries?”

“When the news of Braschi's elevation was known in Rome, the rejoicings were universal; the city was illuminated, and bon-fires lighted in the squares. I was affected at the cordiality with which I was congratulated on the occasion, by people I scarcely knew: on entering the conclave, one pressed my hand, another embraced me, and expatiated on

my happiness in having such a friend; and thanked heaven for giving them so worthy a pontiff.

“I saw with pleasure that justice was rendered to Braschi's merit; but I changed my opinion, when he himself informed me that he was not the dupe of these acclamations; it was not the choice that so delighted the Romans, but the expectation of the approaching entertainments that ensued, and attracted strangers to their city. ‘The volatile and avaricious people of Rome (added he) do not wish a Pope to govern with wisdom, but to govern only a few years. They

are transported at my installation, they would equally rejoice at that of my successor. That shall not prevent me from occupying myself with the care of their happiness, and bestowing on them marks of munificence.' This he did with a generosity peculiar to himself, and which formed a contrast to the parsimony of Ganganelli. The habits of a cloister, where all his wants were supplied *unbought*, made the latter so little acquainted with the value of money, that having given a protégé four louis d'ors, he thought he had bestowed on him

a maintenance for a whole year at least.

“ My friend carried to the pontifical chair that taste for the beautiful, which is to the soul what health is to the body. This taste in a sovereign awakens the love of the arts, and genius hastens to lay at the foot of the throne his various productions. —Thus the master-pieces of art were restored to light, which time, civil discord, or the convulsions of nature, had buried in the bowels of the earth. To procure those curiosities at a more reasonable price, Pius VI. reserved to himself the refusal of all the

antiques that should be discovered ; he placed those he selected in the museum I have already mentioned, which he called Museum Pium Clementinum, associating the name of his predecessor in a glory which belonged to *him* alone ; having conceived the plan of this superb collection, to visit which, foreigners travelled from the confines of Europe.

“ He got the environs of Otricoli explored for antiques, at his own expence, and gave the direction of the work to Carara, an Ecclesiastic, replete with wit and knowledge : the mosaics found by him were of singular beauty.

“The papal throne is ascended at an age when the love of the arts becomes extinct; it seems as if the soul, when near a separation from its earthly mansion, instead of rejoicing, (like a traveller on the point of quitting a bad inn) is wholly occupied in endeavouring to prolong its residence in the fragile abode. Extreme old age, like infancy, is wholly employed in supplying physical wants. Few Popes, except Leo X. encouraged the arts; and we were until the elevation of Braschi only indebted to chance for the antiques that enriched the Cabinets of Europe.

“ But my friend having mounted the chair of St. Peter before his sixtieth year, retained vigour sufficient to amuse his leisure in adorning a museum, which at the commencement of the French revolution was the finest in the world. Observe (said the Marquis, pointing to some beautiful busts) some pieces that might have shone there, which I owe to the magnificent generosity of Pius. They are rendered infinitely dear to me, as pledges of his friendship; and while I admire the features of a Titus, I retrace the grandeur of the companion of my infancy.

“ By how many associations are the affections of the soul awakened to a remembrance of a departed friend. I think I see Braschi requesting me to accept these busts, and my imagination dwells with delight on those moments when, notwithstanding his elevation, I always found in him the same attachment as in our boyish days.” The Marquis stopped, and his eyes overflowed with tears.

O pure and holy friendship! how are you honored by the tribute of these tears. It was not a sovereign the Marquis regretted, but the sincere and faithful

friend, whose confidence he had so long enjoyed, and to whom he imparted his most secret thoughts. I respected this proof of sensibility in the good old man, and thinking a continuation of his recital painful to his feelings, I withdrew, and returned to my cottage.

CHAP. VII.

*First Years of the Pontificate of
Pius VI.*

II Every day became more sincerely attached to the Marquis, and more deeply interested in his story, therefore was I punctual to our appointment. As we approached the period preceding the French revolution, I grew impatient to learn one of its causes, in the conduct of the sovereigns of Europe towards the see of Rome.

I hastened to reach the harbour in which we had met for some days past, there, seated on a bank of moss, shaded by the verdant elms and maples from the scorching rays of the sun; my friend, amid the beautiful scenery of *Nature*, informed me how much mankind had mistook *her* rights, by delivering themselves up, some to the frantic enormities of licentiousness, others to the wild excesses of fanaticism.

But before we entered on this topic, my friend wished to entertain me a little longer with an account of the public works that illustrated the reign of Pius VI.

“The entrance of the Quairinal palace was falling into ruin, Pius caused it to be repaired; he erected the obelisk near the Scala Santa, and directed it to be placed between the two equestrian statues, from which the hill where this palace is situated takes the name of Monte Cavallo. These works were planned by his holiness less with a view to gratify his taste in ornamenting the city, than to rouse the people of Rome from that supine sloth which made them prefer misery to labour. I shall only cite one instance (added the Marquis) to show how far the Romans, for-

merly so proud and indefatigable, hold in aversion any sort of occupation, and even blush not to ask alms rather than earn a livelihood by industry.

“ Cardinal de Bernis walking one day in the streets of Rome, was accosted by a man about thirty years of age, and appearing to have no infirmity who asked him for alms, ‘How (said the Cardinal) do you prefer this unworthy way of life to a comfortable subsistence, which your strength and health would procure you by labour?’ ‘Very true, please your Eminence, (replied the beggar) but I am so *lazy*!’

What answer, to such an argument? It appeared so convincing to his Eminence, that he gave the fellow some pieces of money, and perhaps it would have been *dangerous* to have done otherwise.

“Not content with saving ancient edifices from ruin, Braschi completed the finest church in the universe, by ordering a sacristy to be constructed, which suited the magnificence of that superb temple. Painting, sculpture, and architecture, united to adorn this work, and all those who saw it agreed in the justice of the inscription.—

“ ‘ *Quod ad Templi, Vaticani Ornamentum publica vota flagitant, Pius VI. Pontifex Maximus, fecit, perfecit, quæ, anno 1785.*’

“ ‘ The wishes of the people for the ornament of the Vatican church were satisfied by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI. who undertook and finished its embellishment 1785.’

“ ‘ Modern philosophy would not rank among works worthy the allotment of the sums destined for public utility, those expended by Pius VI. on repairing the monastery of Subiaco, where the order of St. Benedict was founded. This saint first retired to a grotto on the side of a mountain, which gives its name to the abbey ; his

fervent piety and exemplary life soon attracted many disciples, whom he taught to employ time, as a preparation for eternity, without solely depending on the charity of the faithful: as he obliged his followers to work for their maintenance, the once barren wilds, now rich with the treasures of agriculture; impenetrable forests, turned to profitable inclosures, attest in favour of the founder of that order. Which has been most useful to society, this holy man, or modern innovators? When we admire the works of the ancients, can we forget that we were preserved

from the ravages of time in the cells of the disciples of St. Benedict; that copies were then multiplied whose loss would have retarded the progress of literature many centuries.

“ It is natural that Pius VI. who was not tainted with the modern prejudices against regular clergy, should think it incumbent on the head of the church to honor the cradle of the monastic orders in the west. He accordingly caused the ancient abbey to be rebuilt with that taste and magnificence peculiar to himself. He decorated the church with the plate belonging to the Je-

suits, for which he was much reproached; but had he applied it to raising any of the modern institutions of the age, he would have been applauded. The sovereign pontiff of the Romish faith must have been devoid of all religion, to win the approbation of the orators who profess the new doctrine.

“Those who derided the rebuilding the abbey, were, however, forced to admire the improvement of the port at Ancona, which Pius VI. enlarged, fortified, and embellished: he ordered a light-house to be raised, which, during his reign was perfectly well

kept up. This port was free to all nations: all religions were there tolerated; as an assurance of which, Pius VI. put the following inscription:

“ ‘ *Almafides, procures, Vestramquæ condidit urbem,*

“ ‘ *Gaudet in hoc, sociâ vivere pace loco.*’

“ ‘The faith which raised your town, O citizens! is pleased to live in peace with all the world.’

“The systematic gentlemen, who aim at loosening the ties of religion and nature, know no country but the universe: they are of the *great family of mankind*; viz. they consider not the duties of sons, husbands, parents, brothers, or citizens, of any moment. To hate

received life from this, or that man; in one country or another, is disregarded by these sublime geniuses; and 'such fortuitous occurrences (say they) impose no obligation towards our parents or country.'

" My friend, whose conduct was in direct opposition to these lamentable errors, not only loved those to whom he was related by the ties of consanguinity, but bore a strong attachment to the place of his nativity. Cesena was one of the first towns that felt the effects of his munificence: he bestowed on it a fine library, to which he added a certain fund

to make it public, wishing to diffuse learning in the city where he had received the first rudiments of knowledge.

“Let not opulence boast the cottages built for the retreat of idle luxury, where, beneath the humble thatch is found the disgusting contrast of sumptuous decorations. My friend knew how to direct with more utility the taste for rustic habitations. He planned himself a village, where each cabin had a garden in front, inclosed with a hedge; and each was furnished with commodious simplicity, and provided with utensils for different

trades. There were also cattle, and every thing necessary for the reception of the inhabitants. I had often gone to see this work; and having asked my friend how he intended to people this charming spot—‘It is not I (said the Pontiff) who have undertaken that charge. My worthy and constant friend, the Countess, could take no part in the affairs of the Holy see, I have therefore wished to associate her at least in this act of beneficence, so congenial to her soul.

“ On the day appointed for the inhabitants to take possession of St. Lorenzo, Braschi in-

vited me to Countess Falconieri's palace. As I approached, I heard rural music, and on entering the court, saw sixty young people of both sexes, dressed in white, adorned with ribbons and garlands of flowers. I joined this rustic band, who appeared animated with the most unaffected gaiety; and we entered the Countess's chapel, where she had already taken her place. Every bride (for each of these happy couples were to swear eternal love) bent her knee as she passed before Madam Falconieri, who placed on her head the virginal crown, presenting her with a

purse of twenty-five pounds; after which, these happy peasants went to receive the nuptial benediction from a venerable ecclesiastic.

“ The discourse he made on the occasion, moved me to tears. What could be more affecting than the sight of sixty orphans, without other good on earth than their virtue; who found themselves on a sudden snatched from misery, and united to the objects of their affection? For I heard Madam Falconieri had taken particular precaution to learn the inclinations of each maiden that was to inhabit St. Lorenzo.

They were all handsome; and their husbands had received from nature—health, love, cheerfulness, and industry. It is to be presumed, that with such qualifications, the inhabitants of St. Lorenzo must prosper.

“ On leaving the chapel, the brides and bridegrooms were led to a table abundantly served. After their repast, we conducted them to the new village destined for their abode. The name of each proprietor was written on his door; and as the houses were alike, and equally well provided, there was no room for jealousy among the inhabitants, who all

appeared delighted at their fate, and offered up a thousand vows for the happiness of Pius VI. and that of their benefactress. She entered each cottage, saying obliging things to every one, then got into her carriage, followed by the rural train, who would, if not prevented, have escorted her to Rome.

“ I felicitated Madam Falconieri on her choice of the inhabitants of St. Lorenzo. ‘ It was necessary, (she said) for so pleasing a spot, to find men with an appearance suitable to such a picture. I believe it would be difficult to find in all Italy, thirty couple

more interesting. I was two years in endeavouring to collect them; and nothing, I own, afforded me greater satisfaction: nor could my illustrious friend give me a proof of his confidence more agreeable to my taste. When I think that these good folks will never rise in the morning without blessing us; and in the evening, when the families meet, our names will be pronounced in their artless conversations; and they will be uttered with grateful sensibility: I own the idea is to me most sweet.'

" We spoke of the intended marriage, between the Countess's

daughter and the Pope's nephew, which brilliant alliance she saw with a mother's pride. She knew Braschi's tender attachment to his family, of whom she rejoiced to think her daughter would make a part. Alas! how far were we both from thinking that Constanza de Falconieri could not make a more disadvantageous marriage than that approved of by her mother, with Louis Onesti, son to the sister of Pius VI. But who could foresee the French revolution? I was myself the first to engage her to bring about an event I knew would insure the happiness of my friend; and the

marriage was soon after celebrated with royal magnificence.

“ The youngest of Braschi’s sisters had two sons. The second, Romuald, came to Rome during the first year of his uncle’s pontificate, who designed him for an ecclesiastical life, in which he appeared with distinction. The benignity of his countenance announced the candour of his soul, so that he was extremely dear to the sovereign Pontiff, who pleased himself in having less to consult his tenderness for his nephew, than to reward young Romuald’s piety and learning.

“ Louis Onesti appeared with

less distinction at the court of Rome than his brother. Whether his education was more neglected, or that nature, having endowed him with extraordinary strength, had little occupied herself with his intellectual powers; 'he should have rather passed (says a satirical author of the times) for a coal porter, than the nephew of a Pope.'

"However, that may be, the fervent attachment of the pontiff to Louis Onesti, proves the latter possessed of qualities worthy the esteem of a sovereign, who cannot, without the greatest injustice, be ranked among these suc-

cessors of St. Peter accused of nepotism.

“ Yet it was this mortifying prejudice, which lessened in the eyes of Europe, the grandest conception of the human mind ; which, had it succeeded, would have ranked Braschi amongst the greatest benefactors of mankind. You guess I allude to the Pontine marshes, the pestilential emanations of which swept away those who had the misfortune to inhabit that noxious region. People have dared to assert that Pius VI. undertook the work, that it might serve as a pretext to cut down the woods which sheltered Rome

from the sirocco winds, with a view to enrich his nephew by the profits accruing from the sale; and that these vast sums, instead of passing into the public coffers, to carry on the enterprize above-mentioned, went into those of the Duke Braschi's, (for Count Louis had taken his uncle's name).

“ Many circumstances prove the injustice of this accusation. Is it to be imagined that so good a man as Braschi, who had carried his commiseration for the wretched inhabitants of these marshes so far as to visit them in person during the time of the greatest danger, should appropri-

ate to his nephews the money allotted to preserve these unfortunate victims from a slow but certain death? No! the best and most feeling of hearts could never harbour such a design, to satisfy the avidity of his relatives. But the fact contradicts the calumny; for though the work is far from complete, yet it is certain that there were immense sums expended upon it.

“The *Appian way*, which thousands of hands were employed in clearing from beneath beds of slime, where it lay buried for many ages. The canal, Pius VI. caused to be cut across the mo-

rasses to the Lake Fagliano, had reclaimed twelve thousand acres from devastation; and flocks were seen bounding over the plains, where formerly grew those unwholsome weeds that obey the laws of nature only, by emitting the mortal vapours which serve to nourish them. These works, I repeat it, are more than sufficient to exhaust the sums arising from the sale of the forests above-mentioned. There was likewise a bank set up, by the name of *Monte palade*. Mankind, as well as the elements, seemed to oppose the completion of this great enterprize. Sometimes the diffi-

culties attending it were exaggerated to his holiness; at others, hireling writers were employed by his enemies, whose satirical pleasantries would have discouraged any one less anxious for the benefit of his fellow-creatures than his own vain glory.

“The inundations in 1779 and 1785 destroyed a great part of these works, and caused them to be recommenced. One of these inundations occasioned a scene, related by an author I have already cited, which describes the character of my friend, who was not exempt from the first emotions of passion, though he im-

mediately repaired them by acts of justice and beneficence.

“ A priest, who was an excellent clergyman, but a bad courtier, came to Rome to solicit a prebendary; he had traversed the tracts of land which occupied the midnight thoughts of Braschi; he had seen the devastation of the floods, and could give certain intelligence concerning it. He was interrogated by his holiness, who seemed pleased with his artless replies; but when asked his opinion in general of the *enterprise*, he answered with too little art,— ‘ Please your holiness, it appears to me money thrown away.’—

‘What do you call *money thrown away?*’ Insolent! returned the irritated Pontiff. These words were a clap of thunder to the poor solicitor; he turned sick with perturbation, and immediately withdrew. How unfortunate! (his journey was now useless) for instead of returning a prebendary, he incurred the displeasure of his Holiness. Having prepared to depart, in grief of heart, imagine his surprise at seeing one of the Pope’s chamberlains enter, carrying the bull for his prebendary, and a pressing invitation to attend the sovereign Pontiff. This second interview was more

calm than the first, and more profitable to my friend, who found the honest priest as knowing as sincere; he pointed out faults in the direction of the work; and the conductors of it profited by his observations.

“Pius VI. shewed me one day a plan, which appeared that of a considerable town; by the canal that traversed it I doubted not but it was to be built on the Pontine marshes. ‘Yes, (said he) I do not expect to see this plan executed; I only wish to be certain that those who may follow it shall have no danger to fear for their lives: then I mean

to lay the foundation of this town, which is to consist of ten thousand houses; and this canal is to aid the commerce of the new colony. I shall not see it in a flourishing state, but my successor at least may have that satisfaction, if I can execute my intention.'

"O unfortunate prince! You never saw even the first stone laid of that town, which engrossed your hopes and wishes; and it shall be at the option of those whose sovereign bliss is destruction, whether you shall have a successor or not, to whom you might transmit the sublime idea

of erecting a city, on a spot where never a hut was before raised. That country will soon return to its pestiferous state, when the constant hand of labour shall no longer chase from its bed the poisonous slime that over-ran it. Yes, it had been the wish of the destroyers to annihilate the holy see, and with it the remembrance of Braschi's beneficence, but they have been unsuccessful in both these schemes; and a king, whom they marked as their own, has preserved the memory of Pius VI.'s great enterprise.—
 'What gives me concern,' says Frederick II. to D'Alembert, 'is,

that the troubles experienced at present by the court of Rome, did not take place under the Pontiffs who deserved humiliation, and not fall on the head of the honest Braschi, who drained the Pontine marshes.'

"These reflections of the royal philosopher bring to my mind the trials with which it has pleased God to overwhelm the sovereign Pontiff; but I shall not now grieve you with a relation of his first chagrins; these letters I think will best inform you of them, as during the times of discord I was frequently obliged to absent myself from my friend;

but his attachment confided in my bosom his secret sufferings. I have not got his letters about me. I shall bring them to-morrow; when you will see the heart of that father of Christians unfolded, so little known to the world. In this also he resembled Louis XVI. They both seemed formed for the age in which they lived, being entirely divested of their predecessors' pride, which the new philosophers allege, with some sort of reason, to be an injury to society in general. Both sovereigns were ready to cede all that only regarded the honours annexed to their persons;

they appeared strenuously to support the laws; they both gave proofs of firmness of mind, when their consciences were alarmed by the propositions made to them, except on these occasions. These princes were all gentleness and goodness, whom faction hurled from thrones they had honoured by their virtues. But I fear I detain you too long, Madam, for the sun gives but a faint light."

I had not observed that night began to spread her sable mantle over the skies. I quitted the Marquis hastily, and returned to my family.

CHAP. VIII.

First Public Troubles.

I Found the Marquis already arrived at the place of rendezvous. He had carried a small box, containing the letters of Pius VI. with his own translation.—
“You see (said he) I have not forgot to bring the most authentic notes concerning the misunderstandings between several crowned heads and the see of Rome, since

they were written by Pius VI. himself, with the sincerity of true friendship. Here is the account he gave me of his disputes with the Court of Naples.

*Pius VI. to the Marquis *****.*

ROME, Feb. 5th, 1777.

““You have left me, my dear friend, a prey to the inquietude I feel. With regard to the affairs of Naples, every thing seemed arranged, and yet they refuse the *Spanish genet, which I required as one of the rights of the Papal chair. I see with grief that these

* The King of Naples, as vassal to the court of Rome, was obliged to present the Pope with a milk-white horse.

differences diminish the respect due to religion. I cannot separate the temporal sovereignty from that of the head of the Church. Am not I then obliged to support the interests of my crown? And if at any time the Pope was no longer Sovereign of Rome, which might happen without any injury to religion, it is certain that the King of Naples would become vassal to the power possessed of that empire. Could I then dispense with a ceremony which, trifling as it marks dependance, I may affirm, that if I had not reason to fear the Pontiff would be confounded with

the Sovereign, I should not have ceded, because politically I ought not? But they would have profited of this temporal misintelligence, to separate Naples from the Church, and then I should be responsible for the eternal perdition of the people, who blindly follow the will of their rulers. In fine, I have ceded, because, according to my manner of thinking, it was my duty.

“ So many storms threaten the sanctuary of religion, that great prudence is requisite not to lose all. Besides, I never shall forget the words of my Divine master—‘ I will not extinguish the

lamp that burns, neither will I bruize the broken reed.' All Christians are dear to me; I regard them as my children; I would give my life to see them within the peal of the Romish Church, at least it shall not be my fault if any seperate from it.

“ But I repeat that I regard the affairs of Naples as settled, all continues as when you left us. But as you are no longer here, all feel your absence, even Constanza. She is a very amiable young person, and promises to inherit her mother's wit, as she does her beauty. It gives

me unspeakable satisfaction to have united my nephew to the daughter of my dearest friend, I may say, that the pleasure I feel, in calling her niece, derives all its force from the purity of the sentiments I entertained for her mother.

“ Q my friend, did men know the happiness virtue imparts, they would not take so much pains to gratify their passions!

“ We have had a visit from no less a personage than the King of Sweden; he is a very interesting prince. I had some difficulty to find out how we might have an interview: as the head of

the Church, I could not well receive a protestant prince in my palace. It was necessary that we should meet, as by chance, at the Museum, where we saw each other with extreme pleasure. He wished in the most obliging terms to prolong our stay, which was equally agreeable to me. I proposed to be his ciceroné; and shewed him every thing with minute detail. He appeared pleased with me; I was very much so with him. On taking leave, he said—‘Our meeting shall make an epoch, and painting record it to posterity. *Addio il mio amico.*’

“The causes of the misintelli-

gence between the court of Naples and that of Rome, had been fabricated by one Tanucci, who, under pretext of freeing the former from the Papal yoke, (says a certain author) wished to impose one more intolerable. Yet he succeeded but imperfectly; the Spanish genet was again presented in 1778. But (said the Conetable Colonna) in testimony of respect and devotion to St. Peter and St. Paul, Pius VI. did not expect this innovation in the *formula*, but he possessed great presence of mind, which he proved by calmly answering—‘We accept the haquenée as the homage of

the Neapolitan court.' The affair went no further."

The Marquis shewed me many of the Pope's letters during his disputes with Naples. Among others, one where his holiness complained that the King had named one hundred and thirty-nine bishops without the approbation of the see of Rome. 'I do not deny (says Pius in one of his letters) that, in the primitive days of the church, bishops were named by the faithful; but why go back to those happy times? What suited a small number of men, all animated by the same spirit, would not

surely be eligible in times of error and corruption. And is not referring the choice of prelates to a secular power, subjecting them to be nominated by intrigue? Is it not more natural, the bishops being my coadjutors, I should name them? Is it not, looking on the matter in a temporal light, my right as Lord Paramount?’

“This was the opinion of the Court of Naples, and as they wished to throw off the yoke, Tanucci employed every means to that effect. My friend displayed at once gentleness and resolution. Too well informed

not to foresee the vexations preparing for him by the new philosophy, he nominated five Cardinals, esteemed by the Catholic courts, to examine the grievances of that of Naples, and give their opinion like able negociators.

“Cardinal de Bernis was chosen to bring their decision to Naples, and he represented it in such favourable colours, that he convinced even the Chevalier Acton, whose credit began to supplant that of Tanucci. The King was alarmed, on being represented the danger of teaching the people to sport long with *established authority*, and to the astonishment

of the innovators, the peace was concluded. There were concessions made on both sides. The King of Naples ceased to be the vassal of the see of Rome; it was stipulated only, that on every accession to the Neapolitan throne, the Kings his successors were to pay five hundred thousand ducats, as a pious offering to the holy Pontiff. That the latter should chuse bishops from three candidates presented by the monarch; and that the Pope should have the disposal of all inferior benefices, on condition they were conferred on Neapolitans.

“ Thus terminated these vexatious disputes, which lasted ’till the beginning of 1789. The reconciliation was sincere. The King and Queen of Naples visited Rome in a short time after, and were received by his holiness with the most affecting cordiality. Affairs of importance obliged me to be absent from Rome at that time, so I did not see their Neapolitan Majesties; but I ought to have the letter Madam de Falconieri wrote after their departure. Yes, here it is.—

“ *Countess Falconieri to the Marquis of *****.*

“ “ I do not know how it happens, my dear friend, but you

are always absent when we should find most pleasure in your company, as you would partake of our gaiety. We have had brilliant entertainments since your departure. You have not like us seen the King and Queen of Naples; they are just departed.—During their stay here they were almost continually at the Farnesian palace with his Holiness. One could not believe there had subsisted a serious misunderstanding between these Princes. You know our friend's goodness of heart. He received the King as a father does a son, with whom he had reasons for discontent,

yet rejoices at his return. I saw their Majesties several times; the Queen is well looking; she has that air of noble pride which the blood of the house of Austria gives to all its branches. She possesses wit and information; loves to command, of which I believe her very capable. It is impossible, I think, in the King to discover the grandeur of Louis XIV.

“ ‘ I recollect in my early youth to have been at the French court with my mother: all the Royal Family and the Princes of the blood had an expression of countenance which distinguished them

from all the French noblesse; and benignity were depicted in each feature. They were affable and polite; and spoke with such purity of diction, that they in a manner fixed the standard of the French language. In fine, without searching the heart to discriminate virtue from vice, to judge only by the exterior, all foreigners agree that the court of Versailles was the most polished in the world. Well, my dear Marquis, imagine the *reverse* of what I have described the princes of the house of Bourbon reigning in France, and you will have a tolerable idea of the King

of Naples. It is difficult to comprehend how a man destined to command over others could be permitted to acquire manners so boorish: he owes what little degree of civilization he possesses to his wife, and though he has made little progress, she has taught him to read and write, for which he expresses his gratitude by often calling her his dear governess. His heart is good, but his manners are *brutal*; pardon the expression, which ill accords with Majesty I allow. But there is not an artizan at Rome who would suffer his son to behave and speak like Ferdinand.

He was however much pleased with the reception he met from the Pope, and promised to make him another visit: the latter displayed during the residence of his royal hosts, a splendour, a magnificence, worthy his taste and suited to the occasion. The girandole succeeded to admiration; it is in my opinion the finest sight imaginable; I always behold it with new pleasure. The illumination of the copula of St. Peter's met with great applause. You suppose our friend did not forget to shew his museum; but he found the King of Naples very different from his Swedish majesty. Ferdinand is fond only

of hunting: vases, pictures, and statues, are in his eyes of no value.

“ ‘ The Queen saw the above-mentioned collection *con amore*. His Holiness presented their Sicilian Majesties with some superb pieces of mosaic; they seemed sensible of the compliment: every thing announces a good intelligence between the two courts.— This amity is the more necessary, as I think the next sitting of the states general will produce religious contests, Mons. Neckar is a protestant, and will revenge his brethren for the revocation of the edict of Nantz. I hope I am mistaken, but I do not

see that great union of sentiment in France, at a time when many are thought so enlightened merely for having found out that their forefathers were in darkness: the world is not aware of the machinations invented to humble the head of the church.

“ ‘ We all wish and want you here; his holiness sends you his benediction; my son his compliments; and we pray you (my daughter and I) to be assured of our best wishes.

Yours, &c.’ ”

The Marquis shewed me several other letters relative to the troubles in Tuscany, which proved

the wisdom and conciliatory spirit of Pius VI. It is remarkable that he was more respected by the Protestant than the Catholic Princes. Frederic and Catherine gave him unequivocal marks of esteem, whilst the emperor caused him the most violent chagrin. The time we had spent in reading these letters brought on that of our separation, and my friend deferred the German affairs for the next day. Of these he was a competent judge, as he accompanied Pius VI. to Vienna.

CHAP. IX.

“**O**LD age should resemble the close of a fine day: it is the evening of life; tranquility and repose are its attributes. Exhausted by the force of the passions in the prime of life, age seems to claim a right of exemption from their pernicious effects, when they no longer can bestow enjoyment. Yet this calm

falls to the lot of few aged persons. The placid interval hoped for by all towards the end of their career, generally escapes in fallacious expectations; and incapable of great pleasure, they are not less afflicted by misfortune."

Such were the reflections of my respectable friend at our next meeting. It was easy to perceive they had a reference to Pius VI.

"Ah! (said he, mournfully casting his eyes around) if my venerable friend had found an asylum to shelter his hoary head from the political storms that assailed him, he could, like me, now retired beneath the humble

thatch, where he should have only to offer vows to heaven for the faithful; his last days had been free from inquietude; he would have slept like the just, without wishing or fearing his dissolution. But how terrible the evils that precipitated him into his tomb! He drank of the bitter cup of affliction to the very dregs. Regardless of his grey hairs, he was made to suffer what the most robust constitution could scarcely support.

“That sect of men called philosophers, (merely because professing audacious opinions, they had the effrontery to assume that

title) repeated incessantly to the Catholic Monarchs—‘Will ye never cease to depend on a foreign Prince? and will you suffer two powers to exist in your kingdom? One especially deriving its authority from a pretended connection with heaven, by which it possesses arms ever ready to stir up the people to a revolt.’ And taking advantage of scattered facts, which had no reference with our present manners, they persuaded the different powers that their security depended on humbling the Court of Rome.

“Never was apprehension less founded. Many ages had elap-

sed since some Popes had abused their power, by endeavouring to extend it to secular matters; their pretensions had escaped for centuries; but men, like children, frightened themselves at the relation of events past so many years before their existence. Their imagination approached the epochas. And because ignorance, imbecility, and superstition, in the year 1000, rendered an authority formidable which should only extend to spiritual things, the innovators concluded, that in this enlightened age, when the zeal for religion is so frigid, when the Pontiffs had only at least

the *preservation* of the hierarchial power—it was, I say, concluded, that if they were not speedily divested of *spiritual authority*, they would, sooner or later, hurl kings from their thrones: and sovereigns believed these suggestions of imposture!

“They did not reflect (says a sensible author) that their palaces were built against the church; that they could not pull down the one without loosening the foundations, nay, without destroying the other; but pride is devoid of consideration. The desire of change was become a general contagion; Emperors and

Kings, who had nothing to wish, except a permanent duration of political and religious opinions, were smitten with a love of novelty.

“ No prince was more violently attacked with the innovating mania than Joseph II. Endowed with amiable qualities, he had been happy, and rendered his people so, were he satisfied only to be a *good* sovereign, but his desire to become a *great man* was the cause of his misfortunes.

“ O manes of Maria Theresa, how must you grieve at seeing your son, your successor, stray from those paths of prudence

and piety which you had traced for him! Never had this Princess, during her long reign, the least discussion with the Church, whose ministers she honored, and thereby rendering them the firmest support of her throne: and Maria Theresa knew how to govern. But scarce had she descended to the tomb, when *want of respect to her memory* was made a pretext for a misunderstanding between Vienna and Rome.

“On the death of an Emperor it was customary for the Pope to celebrate a solemn service in the Vatican chapel. Pius VI. thought this an honor not due

to an *Empress*, though a sovereign. I do not entirely justify my friend's adhering to the etiquette; there might surely be an exception for the greatest woman of her time: she who living shewed herself a heroine, might well after her decease be honored as an Emperor. This trivial circumstance was laid hold of to bring about the projected rupture between the Pope and the Emperor; and the detractors of papal authority, by encouraging the latter in his projects of reform, and intention of putting the clergy of his states on the same footing as those of France,

doubted not but they should separate Germany from the Catholic Church.

“The King of Prussia had already advised the Emperor to seize upon the property of the religious orders in his dominions. Though Joseph II. had the imprudence to enter into hostilities against the old conqueror, he nevertheless entertained a great veneration for him, and exactly followed his advice, as a mode of liberation, and to become the friend of philosophers. The Pope was deeply afflicted at the designs of the Emperor, and wrote to him in the most affecting

terms, to dissuade him from his plans, which he alledged with reason, prepared the people's minds for the reception of the new philosophical opinions, by eradicating the principle so necessary to regal authority; that every thing is sacred that belongs to religion; and that to raise a sacrilegious hand against the altar is to incur vengeance from Heaven.

“The Emperor, regardless of his Holiness's representations, replied to the Nuntio—‘I do not ask council concerning the affairs of my states, that are merely temporal.’ The Pontiff finding

his letters made no impression, determined to make a journey to Vienna, which he announced to the Emperor by the following bull, in which you will see the character of my illustrious friend depicted.

“ ‘ To our beloved Son in Jesus Christ, Joseph II. illustrious and apostolical King of Hungary and Bohemia, elected King of the Romans. Pope Pius VI.

“ ‘ Our beloved son Francis Herzan, Cardinal of the holy Catholic Church, Minister-Plenipotentiary to your Majesty at the see of Rome, has remitted to us your Majesty’s gracious letter, dated the 8th of October pre-

ceding, by which you answer ours of August 20.

“ ‘ We are extremely afflicted to learn that our entreaties, not to despoil the Holy see of a privilege it has enjoyed in the remotest ages, of nominating Bishops, Abbés and Deacons, in your states of Austrian Lombardy are ineffectual; that this right is to be solely vested in you. We shall not, my beloved son, enter into the discussions that arose about the middle of the Christian æra, after which, peace having been restored to the Church, she became possessed of the ancient rights and discipline, con-

firmed to her by the constant decrees of the ceremonial councils. But we are obliged, from our regard for you, and the trust confided to us, to assure you that when the Apostles founded churches, and established priests and bishops, they were never suspected in this point of encroaching on the secular power. The Church has preserved this right without any pernicious consequences to crowned heads. As to the property bestowed by the munificence of Princes, and the bounty of individuals, your Majesty is not ignorant that it was always regarded as the patrimony

of the poor, and on that account respected by your ancestors; so that in the opinion of all, this property cannot be applied to any other use than that of its original destination.

Your glorious ancestors, and recently your august mother, acknowledged these truths, when they were set in the strongest light, during the negociation between that great Princess and Benedict XIV. concerning the benefices situated in Lombardy.

We ardently wish to treat with you as a father with his son, but this intention might at a distance meet with obstacles, we

have therefore resolved to approach your Majesty, regardless of the length and the inconveniences of a journey, undertaken in an advanced age and an infirm state of health; we shall gain strength from the great and only consolation, of being able to speak to you, and to declare how much we are disposed to satisfy you, and conciliate the rights of his Imperial Majesty, with those of the Church. We pray your Majesty to consider this step as a particular instance of attachment to his person, and the desire we have to preserve the ancient union subsisting be-

tween us. We ask this favour not only for ourselves, but the common cause of religion, whose prosperity we should watch over, and which it is our duty to protect.

“ ‘Given at Rome Dec. 15th, 1771, in the seventh year of our Pontificate.’

“ Who could imagine that the Emperor would not have been affected by such a proof of attachment from a pastor, who, to seek the stray sheep, regards neither distance, inclemency of season, age, nor infirmities? Who could have expected the following answer on the part of the Prince?

*“ The Emperor Joseph II. to his Holiness
Pius VI.*

“ ‘ Most reverend Father !

“ ‘ Since your Holiness persists in the design of visiting us, you shall be received with all the respect and veneration due to your high dignity.

“ ‘ The object of your journey is a business which your Holiness considers as undecided, but concerning which my resolution is fixed. Permit me to believe that your trouble will be fruitless. I must inform you that my determinations are always suggested by reason, equity and religion. I assure your Holiness that I

entertain all the respect and veneration for him which is incumbent on a true Catholic.

“And, asking your benediction;

“‘I remain, &c. &c.’

“This letter did not shake the resolution of Pius VI. and in spite of the remonstrances of Cardinal Bernis and the Chevalier Azara, both worthy his confidence from their eminent talents, (were they not invested with a dignity that ought to have given weight to their advice) my friend persisted in his fatal project.

“What does your Holiness expect?” (said I.)—“Nothing, (replied he) but a father should

not have to reproach himself that he neglected any expedient to reclaim a lost son from error."—

"But your health is bad and this journey may be at the expence of your life." "I go to Vienna as I should go to martyrdom, for the interest of religion. It is our duty to risque, and if necessary, to sacrifice our lives for the good of the faith. Is it in the midst of a storm that it can be permitted to abandon the vessel of the church?"

"Azara hinted to his Holiness, that Prince Kaunitz was capable of using indecent raileries on the

subject of his journey.—“What does it import (said Pius VI.) that the minister should find me ridiculous, if I can touch the heart of his master. Do not we know that we ought to appear absurd for the sake of Jesus?”

“Pius VI. found it most difficult to resist the solicitations of his family, who made use of every exertion to dissuade him from undertaking so painful a journey, but he was inexorable to all, even to the intreaties of Madam Falconieri, still his most affectionate friend, endeared by a long course of years, which increased his veneration; she re-

presented in vain the uneasiness he would cause his friends.—

“But Madam (said he) I shall return with the certainty that I have done all in my power.”

“Yet he could not withstand a moment of sensibility when he delivered his will into the hands of the two Braschis.—‘If I die (said he) before my return, you will see my intentions; remember me in your prayers.’—

He was so persuaded he should die in Germany, that he suppressed the bull—*Ubi Papa, ibi Roma*, that the conclave might be held at Rome, in case he expired out of that city. As he

designed me a place under government during his absence, I mentioned that I should take advantage of his stay in Germany, to visit Cesena.—‘Then you will accompany me there,’ (said he). I assured him it was my intention; but dared not add that I should escort him to Vienna.

“The 27th of February, 1781, was the day appointed for the Pontiff’s departure. On the night of the 26th, he descended into the vaults of St. Peter and St. Paul’s to celebrate the holy mysteries. His piety, the alarm felt by all present at his approaching

journey, the solemnity which the silence of the night adds to the ceremonies performed beneath her darksome veil, all rendered the scene truly affecting. We were in tears when the holy Pontiff gave us his benediction. That of a dying father to his children could not be more pathetic.

“The Count and Countess of the North had then been but a few days at Rome: they learnt his intended departure with concern, as it deprived them of the company of a Pope, whose gentleness and urbanity captivated even Princes of a different communion from the Catholic Church. The

illustrious visitors from the north hastened to be presented to his Holiness. The veneration which fame had inspired could not but increase on beholding Pius VI. The Count and Countess were struck at the august and graceful air with which he received them.

“From this moment the son of Catherine vowed a sincere friendship to the sovereign Pontiff, and he was faithful to his engagement. We shall see him, (forgetting the immense space that separates the two empires) send numerous legions to revenge the insults offered to a religion he

revered, though differing in some points from his own. Paul had it not in his power at that time to serve my illustrious friend, having no influence in his mother's councils, who saw in her successor only an enemy of her authority; yet he wished to give him a proof of his respectful attachment. The morning of our venerable traveller's departure, we heard mass in the church of St. Peter; after which he repaired to the vestry, where he was expected by the heir of the northern Semiramis, with his royal consort. They bid his Holiness adieu, in the most affecting terms,

requesting his acceptance of two *pelisses* to protect him from the inclemency of the season. Pius VI. was sensible to this delicate attention from a Prince of a different persuasion, while he who should be the strongest bulwark of the Romish see, overwhelmed him with affliction. The contrast could not escape the Pontiff. This grievous comparison brought tears to his eyes, which the Count and Countess endeavoured to disperse, by making a thousand wishes for the success of his journey, as they accompanied him to his carriage.

“ An immense crowd followed

him the first stage, and quitted him with the liveliest regret. He was a father who absented himself from his children. On leaving Rome, he ordered the church of St. Peter to be illuminated, and fire-works to play off at the Castle of St. Angelo, in honor of Paul's visit to the capital of the Christian world.

“ His Holiness was accompanied as far as Otricoli by most of the Roman noblemen. We arrived the third day at Talentino. Who could believe that fourteen years afterwards, this town would see negotiations carried on, in which Pius VI. should be allowed

only the shadow of authority at the expence of the greatest concessions, which authority even he should enjoy but a few moments? However alarmed by the rapid progress of innovation, the successor of St. Peter was far from foreseeing to what a length the apostles of Atheism would one day proceed. How fortunate that man is ignorant of futurity; he would otherwise not only suffer present, but future evils at once, without being able to prevent them. Pius VI. in pursuing his rout to oppose the designs of Joseph II. felt a sufficient share of affliction, from the intriguing

spirit of that Prince, were the book of fate opened, to shew him the French commissary within the walls of Talentino, granting him the sovereignty of Rome, at the solicitations of the Spanish ambassador. His Holiness would not then have been able to pursue his journey. But I feel that I can no longer continue my recital—besides I fear Madam, that from the abundance of my subject, I trespass on the time you allot me.”—
“It is difficult to calculate time (I replied) when engaged by a narration so interesting. Yet for your own sake, I shall not abuse

your complaisance. Adieu 'till to-morrow." I arose, and was accompanied by the Marquis to the little wood, where we were met by a servant, who came to attend me home, for it was almost dark.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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